

OBSESSED & STUBBORN

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by [hehepoopoo](#)

Summary

“Look, you’re gonna be mad.” Wilbur said. George rolled his eyes.
“It can’t be that bad, I mean, if it’s good for the band, it’s good for the band.”
“It’s amazing for the band,” Niki chimed in.
“Yeah, exactly! I want what’s best for you guys,” He smiled. “You can tell me.”
Wilbur sighed. “OK- so.” He cleared his throat. “You know Dream, right? The singer that you never shut up about how much you hate?”
George’s face fell.

Notes

hi!! so, coming back to this now that its finished, i thought i should put up trigger warnings for this fic because they are very needed and i wouldnt want anybody to finish this unsettled or with bad memories brought back :)

there is not explicit scenes of doing it but heavily implied drug use ,, alchohol,, a LOT of characters smoke, and sexual abuse (though not explicitly written, just discussed + i am a victim of S/A so i can write about it) though very brief there is discussion of fathers leaving, and whilst it is only mentioned once in this part to the book one of the characters does have

religious trauma. there's a lot of cursing throughout the story, always, and some scenes in which characters are yelling at each other, discussion of cheating, and unhealthy relationships.

this fic has meant a lot to me, and i really hope that you can enjoy it. i appreciate comments of all kinds, enjoy!!

The Grammys

There he stands- on his stage- on the screen. Blonde hair intentionally messy. Abs shining with sweat as he did overly sexual dances. How could anyone swoon over a man who was fucking *molesting* his microphone stand? Clay is as annoying as ever - whatever stupid fucking stage name he's using now.

Sadly, though- he was nominated for a fucking Grammy. And besides- *This* is the song he chooses to sing? '*You make me go- oh, oh, oh, oh*' shut. UP! Maybe some form of fucking lyricism and talent would make up for the fact that he's humping the air on live TV, but no! So gross. George taps at the counter with annoyance, waiting for his Frappuccino.

"I can't really tell if you hate him or if you want to fuck him," His boyfriend says absently, northern accent decorating his words.

"Ew- God, I hate him. Imagine getting invited to the *Grammys* and singing a song that is that shit," George rambled, "Like- God, it pisses me off! There are actually talented people out there and he will just fuck the stage and moan into a microphone and suddenly hes 'the new John Lennon'?"- John groaned at the mention of the article, having already heard over and over about how much of a disgrace that was, "-Horrific, honestly."

"George!" the woman yelled, and John reached out to grab his drink and they walked out, George giving one final glare to the screen on which *The Grammys* was playing. George sucked on the straw energetically. The door rang as they left the *Starbucks*.

"Well, *The Grammy s* are a scam anyways, so of course a industry plant like him would get in. He's probably gonna win, knowing them." John said, as they got into the car, keys clattering.

"Whatever- can we stop talking about him?" George groaned, pulling on his seatbelt.

"You're the one who never shuts up about him." John deadpanned, starting the vehicle, "I'm just going along with what you like to talk about."

"I *like to talk about him* because it's so easy to make fun of him with such a joke of a career."

"Okay."

"Okay."

Neither of them spoke for awhile after that. The car buzzed across London, swerving down the roads, through the bland scenery, just as George like it. John made some comments about his day at work, about how some kid was being a btich to him, ("isn't that their job, though?" George had responded with) and the car swerved and turned until it reached their apartment. George grabbed the bags of groceries and wandered inside, pushing the door open with his shoulder.

He kicked his shoes off, placing the bags down on their table, and seeing John walk in behind him. George greeted their kitten, scratching the underside of it's chin. "Hi, baby," he giggled.

"Are you cheating on me with our fucking cat?" John joked, and George rolled his eyes, giggling softly.

"I would *never* ," he said, letting him wander off to their crammed living room. George grabbed some milk and put it in the fridge.

“What are we gonna name him?” John said.

“Uh, Gregory.”

“That’s dumb, you can’t name a cat a man name,” John said, missing the joke. George didn’t bother to correct him. Their conversation teetered off into silence.

“It’s our two year anniversary soon, you know.” John said.

“That’s so crazy- how like time has gone that quickly,” George replied, smiling. “It doesn’t feel like two years.”

“What do you wanna do for it? The usual?”

The usual meant sex. A whole lot of it. George tilted his head to this side, memories of wearing a scarf in the middle of summer and struggling to walk. He scoffed, “Maybe.”

“That means yes, I’m guessing? Or... The usual, with, something else, maybe?”

George rolled his eyes, leaning up against their fridge, “What does *that* mean.”

John shrugged, “Whatever you want, baby.”

He saw him glance at George’s left hand. George pushes away the implications of it, pulling his hands behind his back and forgetting.

John’s mouth moved to George’s, catching him off guard, a gasp emitting from his lips. John stuck his tongue into his mouth and kissed George angrily, possessively. George pulled back, “Did I do something?”

“Shut up and kiss me,” John pushed him against the wall. George sighed into his lips, tiredly, and reluctantly kissing back. John was such a aggressive kisser, George tried to enjoy it. At least he was something. At least he had someone.

“I love you,” John groaned, pushing George against the mattress. George didn’t respond.

“I honestly don’t know how you are still alive,” Nikki complained, “Thats tomato sauce.”

“Yeah.”

“On *Mac n cheese*. ”

“Yeah.”

Nikki gaped at him. “You are *disgusting* . Wilbur- he kisses his boyfriend with that mouth.”

“Wilbur, you have to back me up here,” George begged, looking down at his red tinted Macaroni sadly.

“I really wish I could man, but there is something morally wrong with unironically eating that.” Wilbur said, and Nikki laughed loudly, pointing at George and yelling “*I told you!*”

“Well, you shouldn’t need a man’s opinion to make yours valid, *Nikki*. ”

Wilbur “ooh”ed in delight. Nikki looked genuinely mad for a second.

“OK, says *you*. You rely on men to do everything for you, George, I was just saying it’s two to one and you are disgusting.”

George rolled his eyes, taking another mouthful. *You rely on men to do everything for you, George.* So not true. He’s independent- his boyfriend is barely even a part of his life. He barely even matters. As soon as the thought perked up in his mind, he immediately realised how weird that sounded, and decided not to repeat it out loud.

George’s eyes wandered over to the guitar Wilbur had, laying on his couch. He perked up, “Oh, yeah, I saw that your song got 700,000 views. That’s like- that’s incredible.”

“It’s fucking insane,” Wilbur laughed in disbelief. Nikki nodded enthusiastically. “It’s like- everything I wanted, it’s happening. It’s beginning. Like This is the beginning of something- something big. Seven. Hundred. Thousand. And- and comments as well. They like it, they like the song. They like what we have to say.” He looked at Nikki. “It’s- it’s incredible.”

Wilbur was in a indie rock band called *The Discs* (dumb name, nobody had the courage to tell him though). He was on vocals, Nikki played drums, and they had some other person who George wasn’t that close with doing bass. George would play piano for them sometimes, live even occasionally. He had to go into the studio when they were recording their first album to play for them. He was more or less an unofficial band member, but he never actually could be a part of it- it wasn’t his thing, and it wasn’t John’s thing either. But Wilbur still insisted on begging every now and then to play for them- “*Please, please, my dad is there and it will just tie the whole thing together. You’ll only have to play for three songs, and nobody knows who you are, and I swear, everyone’s really chill. Nobody like screams or anything.*”

“We have another show coming up,” Nikki said. “Saturday next week, right?”

“Yeah. The 27th.” Wilbur’s eyes glinted at George, who glared at him in response.

“No.”

“*Fine!*” Wilbur sighed, “We could like, be famous- who knows, maybe next year we’ll get invited to *The Grammy* s, and-”

“Oh my *God*, can you believe Clay won best album, by the way?” George interrupted, voice exasperated.

“Not this again,” Nikki groaned. “You don’t have to call him Clay, by the way.”

“Yeah, it’s creepy. Just because you went to school with Dream doesn’t mean you get to act like you still know him.”

“I *do* know him, and he’s a dickhead,” Wilbur rolled his eyes at that. “He is! He’s a homophobic dickhead.”

“He could have *changed*. ”

“Yeah, but he didn’t. He’s an asshole, who gets everything he wants, and he’s an untalented dickhead.” George huffed, stuffing more Macaroni in his mouth. “Dream- *Dream*. That is such a stupid fucking stage name. Have you seen that interview where he’s like-” George did a high pitched terrible american accent- “*It’s because I’m a Dream*’ GOD! Just shut up- you know what he should be called? Nightmare. He’s a fucking nightmare.”

“Ok, Grandma, let’s get you to bed,” Nikki joked, which made Wilbur laugh. “I dunno, I kinda

liked his album. I dunno why you're so obsessed with him if you hate him that much."

"I'm not ob--"

"You are! You *so are* !" Wilbur yelled, accusing him by pointing his fork at George. "I bed while John's fucking you- you're like '*ah, that feels so good~! Also did you hear that Clay-*' " Nikki erupted with laughter, banging the table and cackling. George's mouth hung, agape.

"I do *NOT*!" he laughed, completely red.

"So anyways, these kids- Toby and Ryan? They are the fucking worst, they always.." George drowned out what his boyfriend was saying to think about it. He wasn't obsessed. He never could be obsessed. He just hates him. George scoffed, His friends are so dumb.

The thing Nikki had said stuck with him, *I dunno why you're so obsessed with him* . He wasn't obsessed with him. He knew he wasn't obsessed with him- why would she say that?

"George? Are you even listening?" John laughed. George blinked.

"Um."

"Ok, I'll take that as a no, then. So basically, I wanted to take you to the park where we met for our anniversary."

Their anniversary. Right.

"Uh.. I thought we were just doing the usual?" George tilted his head to the side, pale fingertips pressing against his chin. He felt a tiny stubble there.

"Do you not think its a good idea?" John said.

"Well.. No, it's just that like," John was staring at him expectantly. "I dunno, don't you think a park is a bit.. Stereotypical?"

"Yeah, and it's nice." John looked disappointed, brows furrowed downwards. George avoided his eyes. It was such a bad idea. The park would be cold, and windy, and uncomfortable. It wasn't exactly romantic.

"Couldn't we just like.. Stay home?"

"Stay home. For our *two year* anniversary?" John leant back in his chair, looking exasperated. God, God, how can he say this.

"No I mean, if you really want to, we can--"

"Well then I'll just feel bad because I know you aren't enjoying it!"

"I.. I could enjoy it?" George tried.

"Well- what's something other than staying home that you would like to do? That something a couple would do for their anniversary."

"I.. I don't know? Look it up or something!"

"Why do *I* have to do that?" John yelled. "Ok, how about we go kayaking?"

Worse. So much worse.

“No- that’s-”

“What do you *want to do then* ?” John rubbed his eyes. “Look- just- Just think about it. And tell me. It’s the 21st. That’s five days, George. Think of something.”

He went into his room, sighing. He seemed pissed. Their cat went over to George, meowing for some food. George grabbed some, and a bowl, mind racing. Honestly, he didn’t really want to do the anniversary.. At all. Recently, John had acted like they were settling down. George wasn’t ready for that. He knew John was 27, but George was 24. He should understand that he doesn’t want to build a fucking family.

George sighed. The cat meowed.

A the instruments all came together rhythmically, Wilbur’s voice raw, and honest. Nikki was playing softly on the drums, joining Wilbur with the background vocals every now and again. It was catchy, you had to admit. How George agreed too this, he didn’t remember, but here he was, practising playing for Wilbur’s stupid indie rock band. He grinned as the chorus chimed in, lyrics absurd yet understood. His piano part came in, simple yet effective, as the song closed. The band erupted with cheers.

“That was so good!” Nikki said. “You need to jam out with us more, it sounds so fucking cool.”

George flushed at the praise, “Ah, no, I need to research what to do for my anniversary-” *boo* ’s filled the room. George laughed. “If you do *Smudged Eyeliner* I’ll join you later, though.”

He went to sit down on a singular fold up chair, laying against the wall in this strange warehouse Wilbur had booked out for their practices. George reached for his phone in John’s leather jacket (which he was wearing), opening up safari.

What to do for your anniversary , he typed.

He searched and searched, noting down every option that he thought would be ok- *stay at a bed and breakfast*, check, *go to a movie*, check, *see some friends*. He definitely wanted it to be casual. A drive in movie theater could be cute. He put his phone back in his bag, and opened a cola can as the music played softly in the background.

“We’re bought to do *Smudged* , if you want George!” Wilbur yelled, grinning.

George shrugged, rolling his eyes. “Why not.”

George and John’s apartment was pretty boring. Small, english, and boring. Messy, as well, thanks to John. Cans cluttered around their living room, half eaten takeaways littered their table. It was cramped, having to force a living room and a kitchen somehow together, George had decided on putting a circular table as an intersection between the two rooms, its not like either of them used it though. It was where George was sitting, watching a man outside light a cigarette, smoking pouring out and desaturating the morning sunrise. Cheap artwork and photography decorated monochrome walls, full of colour that George couldn’t see.

He sighed, sipping on stale water. It was their anniversary creeping closer. George rubbed his eyes. He wished it wasn’t.

“Oh my god, I slept so bad last night,” John groaned, leaning backwards from where he stood and stretching. His hair was messed up, eyes red and with dark circles around them.

“You look terrible,” George commented, which made John scoff and smack him playfully.

“Do you know what we’re gonna do yet?” John asked, looking at George absently.

“I.. Uh,” George scrambled for his phone on the table. “Um, yeah, just a second. Uh.” He pressed his thumb against the home button, the screen flashing open. “We could go to a drive in movie?”

John stared at him. “Baby, that’s.. I don’t know.” He rubbed his eyes. “I just- I kinda want to like. Talk with you. Like, spend actual time together.”

“That would be time together, though.” George said. He felt bad. He stared at his empty cup, swirling around the leftover droplets. “I don’t know- yeah. We could just do the thing you wanted.”

“The park?” John smiled at him.

“Yeah,” George smiled back. It didn’t seem as bad. He got up from his seat, placing the empty cup in the sink. He then, turned around, and kissed John. Soft, sweet. Almost domestic. He smiled into the kiss, and John immediately kissed back. Slightly awkward, as all of their kisses were, but it felt nice. John was the one to pull back, and looked at George like he was special. Like he meant something.

It made George remember why he liked him in the first place. Because in no universe, no timeline, no ending, would John not genuinely look at him like he mattered. Not act like he was something worthy of love. George pressed his face into his stupid bright pyjama top, with a dumb cartoon on it, and they fell into an embrace.

Sometimes, it was nice. Sometimes, they worked.

“Guys- Guys wait,” Wilbur said, overtop of the music. They had been practicing a song called *Sage And Cigarettes*, in which Nikki sang, and they stripped down the already quiet rock elements into a more Lana Del Ray esc vibe. It wasn’t the most popular out of their songs- not that any of them really were, but it was probably one of George’s favourites. As soon as Wilbur spoke, Tommy - (the kid on bass, Wilbur’s younger brother), stopped playing, and Nikki looked at him, surprised. George had been sitting at the same seat he had been last practice, scrolling through Twitter absentmindedly.

“What is it?” Nikki asked.

Wilbur was beaming. “We just got invited to play for this kid’s birthday venue. Tonight. 9pm. There’ll be like- 100 people there.”

“Tonight?” Nikki said, smile growing on her face.

“I know it’s really sudden, and super short notice, but-” Wilbur got cut off by the kid, Tommy, yelling “Yo-o!” and running to hug his brother, who immediately hugged him back. Nikki joined them, laughing.

They pulled away, smiling and celebrating, words of happiness and giddy excitement. They were really getting somewhere- actually getting somewhere.

Wilbur immediately turned to George. “So, you know, we do need a pianist.”

“No.” George immediately responded with.

“Come *on*, you have to now!” Wilbur said, staring down and George from his seat at his piano.

“No.” George smiled. “Besides, you said 27th, not whatever the date is today.”

“Yes, but we’re famous, baby!” Wilbur yelled, waving his hands up in the air and gesturing at their cheap instruments and bad set up.

“Wil.”

“Yess..?” Wilbur turned his head to stare at George.

“70,000 views.”

“Seven *hundred* thousand,” Wilbur crossed his arms and smirked. “That’s over half a million. Don’t you want to be playing for a band with a million followers?”

“That’s a stretch- they’re viewers, not followers,” George pointed out, “Who knows, they all could just be listening to it to be like ‘*wow, this is the worst thing that I’ve ever heard in my life.*’ ”

“Kinda funny how you were supporting us a few days ago and now making fun of us,” Nikki laughed. “Fake like plastic, George.”

“I’m just saying- I’m not playing tonight. I don’t want to play,” George smiled, “I have to spend time with my boyfriend.”

“I thought Dream lived in America.” Niki said. George flipped her off.

“George- we need you-” Wilbur started, immediately getting interrupted by George.

“ ‘*We need you*’ ,” George mocked, “Look, just get the fucking teenager to play the piano.”

Tommy frowned from across the room.

“That would be an amazing idea if he knew how to play the piano, and it was humanely possible for someone to play bass and piano at the same time,” Wilbur retorted. “Look, you’re playing tonight. We got a gig, we wanna seem good. If you genuinely really don’t want to, don’t, but as a friend, it would be helping me.”

George rolled his eyes. “OK, *fine* -” Nikki clapped in excitement. “John will be disappointed though. What’s the venue?”

“It’s- uh, it’s a bar. I’ll text you it. Thank you so much- you won’t regret it,” Wilbur beamed at him.

They practiced all of that afternoon. Guilt immediately starting creeping, reminding him that hes not prepared, and that there will be a whole damn lot of people staring at him. Expecting him to be amazing. He didn’t even really fucking know how to play for a band.

“Ok, we need to be there in 40.” Wilbur said, wandering over to George. “I’m just gonna go

for a cig outside.”

George smiled at him, feeling his throat tighten at the mention of smoking, dark memories of youth coming back. He grabbed his phone shakily and send his boyfriend a text- *‘i’m going home late tonight. Sprry’* he sent it to fast, not being bothered to correct the typo.

He took a long inhale, trying to ignore the way his fingers shook as he turned his phone off, placing it back in his coat. One hundred people. He felt his eyes well up- thinking- no, no, God please this cannot be happening right now, wiped his eyes. His breathing fastened, head spinning and not being able to focus on anything other than how fucking untalented he was. The brown, fake wood floor blurred. He was going to faint. Or be sick. He inhaled, rubbing his eyes and grabbing Niki’s drumset for balance. He looked up at the roof.

Go to Wilbur. He knows what to do. Go to Wilbur.

He walked, slowly, clutching his right wrist tightly, down to where Wilbur had left earlier. He swung open the door, and cold air hit warm tears against his face. He adjusted his coat, holding it against him to make him feel as though someone was hugging him. Like he had someone. He squinted to find Wilbur against the evening shade, and English cloud. He stood, like that man had earlier the morning, smoking. The smell was disgusting- how anybody would *want* that in their lungs he didn’t understand. It clogged up the air, the further George walked the harder it was for him to breathe.

Wilbur turned casually at the noise, aloof. George didn’t want to say anything- he couldn’t, he knew his voice would break. Instead, he walked closer to Wilbur and pressed his face into his sweater awkwardly, arms still by his side. The gesture, a weak, *‘Hug me. I’m sad’*. Wilbur instantly understood, throwing the cigarette to the ground, the butt burning away on the pavement.

Wilbur smelt of smoke, and his sweater itched on George’s face. But God, he was such a morally good person. There was just something incredible about him. That you would instantly know that he would care. That his brain was a galaxy of thoughts, and ideas, none of with George could fathom. Talking to him, you would travel through a milky way of talent, and amiability. He truly was an incredible friend.

“Are you OK?” Wilbur asked, a grin in his voice, though still full of concern. George pulled away, wiping his eyes with the end of his coat that had rolled up, covering most of his palm.

“Yeah,” George’s voice shook, and he immediately avoided Wilbur’s gaze, looking down to his feet. The but was still burning away, lines of smoke swirling up into the sky, until the small yellow light flickered out.

“I’m nervous, as well. It’s okay,” Wilbur smiled, “I mean it when I say we need you. The band isn’t good without you.”

“I just.” George started. The dry wind was loud, cold. He tried desperately to keep his voice steady. “I.. I guess I don’t really believe that. There’s gonna be so many people.”

“Hey,” Wilbur grabbed George’s shoulder, brotherly, almost. “You know, when I was 14, we did a show. Like a musical thing.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. It was- it was Peter Pan,” Wilbur smiled at the memory. “I was the understudy for this

kid, Lauchlan- fucking bitch. He got everything. He was playing Peter- of course, and my crush was playing Wendy. I tried so, *so* hard to get Peter Pan, but I wasn't good enough. I just wasn't as good as Lauchlan, simple as that. He was better than me." Wilbur cleared his throat. "But, I got to understudy for him. So I learnt all of these lines and I watched him and my crush flirt on stage every single practice for *weeks* . And I prayed, and prayed, and prayed that he would be sick on the night. And guess what happened?"

George sniffed, "He was sick?"

Wilbur grinned. "Yup. But.. When he got sick, it was like.. Suddenly. Even though it was everything I had wanted for so many weeks- the thing I *fantasised* about. I suddenly got so- so nervous. So when we turned up for school, and our teacher was calling the roll, and one of his friends said he was sick- I burst into tears. I didn't want him to be not there. I liked the idea of it- I manifested the fantasy into real life. It was like, I didn't actually want anything that big in my life to happen. I just liked thinking about it."

That felt like a very direct, intentional call out to George. Wilbur continued, "So, obviously, I still had to play it. So I thought- you know. This is the thing you want. Why are you scared of it happening? So I- I got up on that stage, and I was Peter Pan. I did- I did incredible. I got to kiss my crush, and it was amazing. Even though I had gotten so nervous- it was just the short notice I was scared off." He turned to George, and said, softer. "It's just short notice. You're gonna be great." He paused. "And if you're still nervous when you get up there, just try and prove to the audience that you're better than Dream."

The wind whistled, and laughter from some friends in the distance filled the air. The sky was a canvas of amber and gold.

"OK," George giggled, after a pause. "You were a very wise 14 year old."

"I know," Wilbur laughed back, "I also discovered that if you cut off a cat's whiskers, it has no sense of direction."

George spun around to face him. "You *cut off your cat's whiskers* ?"

Wilbur erupted into boyish laughter. "Okay- OK! OK. I can explain. It was a dark day."

"I'm sure it was for that poor cat!" George exclaimed, "Did they even grow back?"

"Do you wanna hear the worst part," Wilbur said solemnly. George nodded. "...His name was Whiskers."

Their laughter flooded the street, louder than any stranger in the distance. They continued mindless banter, Wilbur lit another cigarette, George told him that it's bad. Wilbur said he knew.

"I would tell anyone else off for it, I guess it's just the fact that it's me." He had said, "Like- I'm aloud to hurt myself. But others- no. No, God. If I caught Tommy smoking I'd fucking scrap him." He sucked more on the stick, and George laughed. It was sweet, almost. Wilbur got a Uber (Niki and Tommy were already at the venue), and they hushed inside, as it wouldn't be there for another ten minutes. Wilbur scrambled through his bag- "I have biscuits in here. And they're better than anything you've ever eaten. They're two days off- but I swear to god, that's when they taste the best. I save them up until they're off so I can eat them." He pulled them out of his backpack, plastic rustling loudly. They were some strange brand that was made for eating coffee with only.

Wilbur wandered down to where George stood, against a wall, holding them in one hand, backpack slouched off his other shoulder. They both slid down the wall in unison almost, giggling, and George shoved two biscuits in his mouth at once. Wilbur was right. They were delicious.

“Thank you for sharing this tradition with me,” George said, mouth stuffed with food, and crumbs falling out, which Wilbur pointed at and laughed.

“Yes, it’s very sacred,” he laughed, they both grabbed another from the packet, and clinked them together. “Cheers.”

They continued to talk about many other things, still having 10 minutes until the Uber arrived. George felt nervous butterflies fly up into his chest at the idea of the performance. He decided it was excitement.

George’s phone buzzed angrily.

“Is that John?” Wilbur asked.

George switched it on, seeing a thread of notifications of him asking where he was and how excited he was to hang around with George. George sighed. “Yeah.” He ate another biscuit.

“Do you wanna talk about it?”

“Eh,” George shrugged, and then caught a glimpse of the time. “Oh- shit, the Uber is like. Coming right now. Or here.”

Wilbur laughed. “We’re gonna be late for our big performance! *No!* ”

The Uber driver was a young woman, with jet black hair pulled back into a ponytail and monolids. She swore when a not so appropriate for Uber driving song came on as she turned on the car, and Wilbur turned red. George texted him, ‘*Ooo wilburs got a crush*’. Wilbur saw it and rolled his eyes at George, flipping him off, which caused George to laugh more. Teasing Wilbur about his annoyingly omoniant heterosexuality whenever he interacted with any woman was a hobby both he and Niki loved to do. George looked out the window at the passing brightness on the cars and streetlights of London. He caught himself wondering if he’d ever get a hot male Uber driver- before quickly remembering. He has a boyfriend. Jesus Christ.

As they got out of the car, Wilbur told George to go ahead because he was “paying her” (asking for her number). George scoffed, getting out of the car and walking into the venue.

As soon as they got up on stage, and the music started, and George started to see his hands shake. One thing Wilbur had said stuck out to him- “*And if you’re still nervous when you get up there, just try and prove to the audience that you’re better than Dream.*” Kind of ironic how his friend gave him an entire speech and the part that stood out to him was the part about Clay.

So as Tommy kicked in on the bass, and Wilbur sung, and here it was- it was his turn. He was going to play now. The faces were all staring at him- unaware of where the melody would go but sure that if he messed it up. He would ruin the song. So he thought of Clay’s shitty career, and to prove. To prove that he was better than that piece of shit. He played, and he played the best he ever could. The music flowed together, a harmony. It *worked* . It was good. It was raw, open, honest. Abstract. He caught a glimpse of Nikki and Wilbur. Their dreams were

coming alive. And he was helping them.

The keyboard that sat in front of him was cheap, but it was capable of creating melodies that Clay couldn't even begin to imagine. How music can make you feel this alive- in such a boring life, was astonishing. It ran through his veins and helped him, his fingers hitting every note carefully and accurately, sounding seamless.

As the song faded out, the audience all clapped. He looked up at them, and he smiled. He hadn't felt this alive in years.

A Push Into Fame

Chapter Notes

i have been writing so much recently,, my motivation has been through the roof i am so excited for this story you have no idea!!!! also thank you for the wonderful comments- to everyone who has commented- thank you, i appreciate you so much! ENJOY!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The video was fucking everywhere. All over his Twitter timeline, Instagram- and his Tiktok was a whole other story. The same clip over and over. Wilbur hitting the high note, rolling his weight onto the front of his feet, leaning into the microphone and squeezing his eyes tightly closed. Tommy going apeshit on bass- headbanging, shaking his legs, and dancing wildly. Nikki nailing it on the drums, blond hair being thrown everywhere, and her looking up upwards, hair tangled and makeup smudged.

It made them look fucking good. Musically and visually- they sounded fucking amazing, and looked like the perfect indie band image. It was a great clip. The part that George was worried about, though, was the fact that he was in there. And millions of people were seeing it.

To be fair- he looked good as well. Many of the Tiktoks that had popularized the clip were zoom in's on George talking about how they were "simping" for him. It had been later in the show, some members of the party had been throwing water around, and George's hair had gotten wet, and messy which gave him the natural urge to mess with his hair, so by that far in the show George's forehead had wet, curly bangs. He did look cute, though he would never admit it out loud. It was just insane how quickly the clip had surfaced- yes, it wasn't like every single stranger you'd ever walk up to would know about it, but the majority of "alt" Tiktok had been discussing it. Being horny over it. Saying they wanted Wilbur's gender, whatever the fuck that meant.

But somehow, it was less stressful than performing in front of one hundred. Maybe it was just the fact that they weren't actually there- they were through a screen. Away, wherever they lived. Not waiting for you, expecting you to be good.

The Discs had gone fucking insane. They had all crashed at Nikki's, and had woken up to people simping over them on Tiktok. Wilbur was rocking backwards and forwards on the couch, something that he started doing as a joke but seemed less of a joke after it had been going on for 40 minutes. Nikki was surprisingly chill about it, she had reacted calmly- a small, "Oh, cool!"

"What do you *mean* cool, two *million* people under a video about *us*, with *our* song- that's," Wilbur had ran his hands through his hair, laughing in disbelief, "That's fucking insane."

Tommy had slept in until 11, (missing school) and had then woke up screaming at the news. He was definitely a character.

George.. Didn't really know how to react. He was similar to Nikki, at first. He didn't really believe this was really happening- he never even wanted to be in their band. Now everyone's going to expect him to be a part of it. Always. The thought crept into his brain and made him shiver in discomfort- the idea of a life he didn't sign up for being forced upon him.

Calm down, he thought- it's just one Tiktok clip. They're just gonna be one-hit wonders.

The thought calmed him down, relaxing into Nikki's soft couch. Her house was undoubtedly nicer than theirs- she had a better aesthetic understanding than both George and John combined.

The amount of nights George had spent there was too many to count- nights where John and George were slamming doors- words twisted and ill-mannered. Or even just when they had been laughing until their lungs hurt, not wanting the sweet benevolence to fade for the night. George knew Nikki before he knew Wilbur- knew her soft hands and sugary German accent. She had moved to London for College, and they grew close enough that she never went back. Seeing her and Wilbur talk was like watching two twin flames burn simultaneously. A friendship that you couldn't interrupt- couldn't bother. Though George was jealous of it- missed the times when Nikki and he could hug and smile until their cheeks hurt, he had a deep respect for it. And, he considered Wilbur his best friend.

"You're like- famous," George said, "Like. Actually, famous. Like we could go out on the street and people would be like- *'oh those are those people from the Tiktok'*."

Wilbur put his head into his palms and screamed. Everyone laughed- though it was exactly how they felt as well. There was a strong part of George that felt- well. Exactly like Wilbur. Excited. A school-girl like giddiness of *'do those people really think I'm pretty'* as well as the romanticized idea of luxury. It was a dangerous thought- He could either run from it in fear- or drown in it. He didn't exactly know which one. *It was one Tiktok-* he reminded himself. Jesus Christ.

The slight glimpse of fame to John sounded like loosing him, from what George had gathered. He woke up to 14 missed calls, and 34 unread messages from him. All frantic- *Why didn't you tell me you were performing? These people online are being so weird, I'm scared I'm going to lose you. George, please. I'm worried.*

George had ignored them halfheartedly, the anxiety in responding swelling. It's better just to ignore and deal with later. Like that's ever worked to anyone before. Oh well. It's not like he *didn't* want to talk to John about it- no, not at all. He was just scared of having to respond- what he would say. What would happen.

"Hey," Nikki said, "How about we go and get some fancy ass food. On me, we fucking deserve it." Wilbur and Tommy cheered, looking up at her with warm-hearted grins. Nikki continued, speaking over them, "Do you know why? Because we just did an amazing show last night, we killed it, we looked good doing it, and we got recognition for it. We went from 700,000 views to 2.2 million overnight. We are incredible. We deserve this."

They continued to cheer, Wilbur nodding enthusiastically, standing up to give Nikki a standing ovation as if this wasn't her tiny pretty apartment and there was only four members of a shitty indie band there. She laughed, though, of course, and they all smiled. Tommy celebrated enthusiastically, as he always did, and they picked out a restaurant.

They settled on one which was horribly mispronounced by Tommy- (*"I let you get a day off school and you choose to use it by offending the French," Wilbur had said*), and they took Nikki's into town. It felt as though she was the only one with her life together, though George knew that in reality the only real difference was she was she could drive, and knew how to decorate a house.

"Are we there yet?" Tommy asked.

"No," Nikki said, sweetly.

Five minutes later, he repeated it again.

“No, Tommy, we’re not there yet,” She laughed.

By the seventh time, the car was yelling in unison for Tommy to please, God, just shut up. He found this very amusing.

“George, I heard you have a boyfriend,” he said.

“I do,” he groaned, scared of what was coming next.

“Do you call each other by your own name?” He asked, and George pressed his face into his palms, leaning backwards with disappointment.

“No, we don’t call each other by our names, it isn’t 1983 and we aren’t in Italy,” George laughed into his palm.

Tommy continued, “Because that’s a thing gay people in couples do. I would know.”

“You would know?” Wilbur laughed, raising an eyebrow, which made Nikki and George burst into fits of laughter, and Tommy turn red, scrambling to correct himself.

They arrived at the restaurant, and for some reason a part of George expected everyone to be pointing, shocked at how *celebrities* had walked in. It didn’t happen, obviously. Just group of posh middle aged French people who wouldn’t give two shits about a dumb indie band.

A long, thin mirror lined with gold paint went down the hallway. It was too far up for George’s face to be shown, which made Wilbur nearly fall over with cackles. Tall plants decorated corners of the room, designs carved into the walls in almost a church-like fashion. When they all got given menus, each in separate black binders, and were escorted into a side room off of the entranceway by a man in a tuxedo.

“Is it just me, or have we gone into French stereotype land?” Said Nikki, fighting back a fit of laughter, whispered to George, who hit her playfully. Wilbur looked back to see what they were talking about, and Nikki gestured to the French man, and while still holding back contagious laughter, said, “He could get it-” She got cut off by her own laughter, slamming her hand over her mouth and giggling.

The man looked back at her and raised an eyebrow, opening the door to a smaller room. They were taken to a side table, one side off the seats a white leather couch, decorated with pillows embedded with gold coloured string. George could hear Nikki’s wallet crying from there.

They got throughout the meal clumsily, but upbeat. All of them felt as though they couldn’t get through two words without a cackle bubbling up from their throats, cutting them off. By the time their entrée had arrived, tears littered around George’s eyes, and his cheeks hurt from smiling. They were being obnoxious, but as Nikki had said, they’d earned it. George had earned the right to be an annoying young person.

The food was delicious, as they had told the staff through full mouths. It melted against your tongue, flavour seeping down your throat. George had a habit of making sensual noises whenever he ate something really good, which Wilbur *hated*. It had also become apparent to them, after looking around and reading the room, just exactly how underdressed and unprepared they had been for this occasion.

During some point in the meal, George had left to use the restroom. While he washed his hands, he

heard squealing and loud cheering from the voices of his friends- something that he had been hearing a substantial amount recently. Just as the thought of '*What the fuck happened?*' appeared in his mind, he heard bathroom door swung open from inside his stall, and he heard Nikki squealing in excitement. He pushed open the door with his shoulder, shaking off soapy water from his palms. "What the-"

"George- George," Tommy instantly grabbed George by the shoulders. "We just got *amazing* news. Like- fucking incredible. Like. Unbelievable."

Nikki and Wilbur were hugging, celebrating among themselves cheerfully. Wilbur looked like he was crying.

"T-that's great!" George said, confusion clear in his tone. Wilbur let go of Nikki, wiping his eyes and pushing Tommy off of George, moving into the exact hold Tommy had him in.

"Look, you're gonna be mad." Wilbur said. George rolled his eyes.

"It can't be *that* bad, I mean, if it's good for the band, it's good for the band."

"It's *amazing* for the band," Nikki chimed in.

"Yeah, exactly! I want what's best for you guys," He smiled. "You can tell me."

Wilbur sighed. "OK- so." He cleared his throat. "You know Dream, right? The singer that you never shut up about how much you hate?"

George's face fell.

"How the fuck can Clay be involved in this. How does he even-"

"OK. Okay." Wilbur said, "You just said you wouldn't be mad." He laughed, wiping his eyes again. He turned his attention back to Nikki and Tommy- "I'm actually crying. I can't- I can't believe this."

"What is it then?" George laughed, sliding against the stall door nervously.

"OK. So, uh," Nikki took over, giggling with excitement. Instead of saying anything, instead, she handed him her phone. As soon as it entered George's hands, Wilbur inhaled sharply, as though he had just seen someone be burnt.

On her phone, was a tweet by @dreamwastaken, the profile picture of a man with a white mask held against his face staring up at George from through the screen. George sighed. It was a retweet to one of his fan account's tweets, which was the clip of them at the concert. The text read,

Oh my god, these guys are so good !! would love to have them tour with me ahaha, also I think I know that guy on piano... @thediscslondon would you be interested in touring as the opening band for Dream? you guys ROCK! :)

-

"What the fuck. What the *fuck*? Is this some kind of joke?" George yelled, throwing himself back against his sofa. John was staring at his phone in shock. Wilbur and Nikki were emailing Dream's manager. Tommy had been dropped off at he and Wilbur's home. "This has to be a joke- this cannot be real. This can't be an actual thing that happened. God- I was having *such* a good day."

George had refused to talk to them the entire car ride home, after they had left after eating only half of their meal. Nikki had given the french waiter a grieve-ridden stare as they walked out.

“George. I get it, I get it- he’s, he hurt you,” Wilbur said, “But *Dream* just asked us to tour with him. Do you know what kind of press that will get us? Fame, George. We’ll be famous. We barely even have to talk to the main act- normally they don’t even want to associate themselves with them! But- this is our final step before we can ascend into the heavens. Into an easy life. Into fame.”

“*You’ll* be famous. I’m not coming,” George said stubbornly. He knew he was being a bitch. He didn’t care. This was the thing he got to bitch about. Fuck- he didn’t have to go to school for a year with him, get bullied, just for it to be seen as something they can put to the side for their own fame. Fuck. “You guys- you don’t *know him* . But if that’s what you wanna do- spend your time with somebody who’s gonna emotionally abuse you. Go ahead, go ahead! I just don’t want to, personally.”

“Will, I dunno,” Nikki said, having barely spoken thanks to sending various emails to Dream’s manager. “Maybe we shouldn’t be telling him how to feel. You’ve never met him.”

Wilbur stared at Nikki, scoffed, and sat back down in his seat, frizzy hair falling over his eyes from under his beanie. He crossed his arms. The room grew silent other than the soft typing from Nikki’s laptop. George brought his knees to his chest and wrapped his arms around them, flashing a smile at Nikki, who missed his gaze.

“George,” the person who spoke was probably the person George least expected to. John. “Look. That was- that was, what? Seven years ago? I know- that personally, I was different seven years ago. It’s just sad if you haven’t changed at all over 7 years. People- people change. It was *you* who was the one who stood out in the video, and *you* who he mentioned directly in the tweet. You can’t- you can’t just not come. And, as Wilbur said, you’ll barely have to see him. It’s a tour around America, George- four months. That’s a once in a lifetime experience. Stop fucking whining, and go.”

George inhaled shakily. It felt like he had just been hit in the face. He his face into the crevice of his elbow, having being sat holding his knees on the couch, and mumbled, “What does that mean for us?”

“I.” John, “Nothing bad? God- it’s a career opportunity. Not an excuse to break up with me. We all know you want to, may as well just do it now.”

“Hey-” Wilbur said, moving over from the circular table to sit on the couch next to John- not like the distance was long, it barely took one step. “Don’t say that. He doesn’t want to break up with you, man. That’s a weird way to put it, as well. Kind of pushing him in a corner there.”

George shrugged, pushing his legs down to the bottom of the sofa, feet landing on the ground, and leaning back against the couch. He didn’t want to be there. So, so much had happened within not even 24 hours, his brain went fuzzy even trying to narrow it down. He thought about Clay. About his words, about the way he spoke to him like he was nothing. About the way he had made him act. He thought about being the highlight of every show for four months, not even at his own tour. He thought about how underwhelmed the audience would be when all they got was trashy pop after truly authentic songs. He thought about wiping that stupid fucking smile off of Dream’s face.

“OK.” He said finally, looking over at Wilbur. “I’ll do it.”

Chapter End Notes

not my fav chapter ive written so far also still no dream!! its called slow burn for a reason!! remember to comment,, i appreciate you so much if you do! xoxoxoxo

Broken Relationship

Chapter Notes

hihi!! we got some new readers from the last chapter, hello hello!! i hope you enjoy today's chapter it's a bit shorter than normal sorry i'm really just trying to get these out. have fun reading!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

He was doing it. He was doing this. How the fuck did he agree to this again?

Excited text messages from Wilbur or Nikki flooded his phone every four hours with new updates on exactly what Clay's team had updated them about, the details- everything. Clay's manager was very certain about how they *must* fly in that week so that they could prepare in person, get an idea of the stage- how they work, if they're even good enough. When people normally talked about getting pushed off the edge and thrown into fame, they always said the same thing- 'it happens so fast'. George hadn't expected this stereotype to be correct- or, he had, he just expected short to mean a couple of months, maybe. Not a week. George hadn't left his own home- his agoraphobic tendencies creeping back as they normally would whenever his anxieties peaked.

Surprisingly, though- he was almost excited. Nervous, incredibly- yes. But the uncertainty of it as well as the certainty of something big actually happening was electrifying his thoughts- in all ways. Good, and bad. He had been binging Dream interviews, reminding himself of just how much he can't wait to tell him that he hates him in person. Prove to him that he's better.

His boyfriend's way of dealing with it was very different to what George had expected. He didn't want George to leave- anyone could've guessed that. But he was trying to hide it. It was almost sweet- even if it was unhealthy.

George lay in their bed, turned to his side, facing away from John. His hand slid between his head and the soft fabric down of his pillows, urging him to fall into slumber where it was safe. Where it was comfortable. John was laying on his back next to him.

"I wish you could talk to me," John confessed. He must think he's asleep- the realisation hitting George unexpectedly. He stayed as still as was possible, trying to replicate that of somebody asleep. John continued, "I love you. I'm- I'm trying to be supportive. It's what's best for you- for your life. I just..." his voice trailed off into silence- or what George thought was, until frail and weak sobs were audible from his boyfriend's lips. He was crying. George had made him cry.

If he was good, he would've turned to him. Told him it was ok. Told him he loved him as well- that he didn't want to go- that he wished that he wanted to try. All of the wound up thoughts that had been pushed to the side, though they were both subconsciously aware of. They would never have that conversation though. They weren't honest enough for that. They weren't real enough for that. So there George laid, listening to the gentle whimpers of the man he was supposed to love, and wishing he was, truly, in a deep slumber.

How many nights does he do this? George's mind wandered. He is always complaining about how little sleep he got.

The thought stung.

John inhaled shakily, "I... I'll miss you. I know you won't miss me. I... God, George," he let out hearty, grieving laugh. "I had so much planned for us. And all you care to plan for was for yourself. I know it's- it's not technically the end. But we were dead long ago. I don't even know if we were ever alive." His voice broke on the last syllable. He tried his best to hush his words to a mumble, "You're incredible. You're gorgeous, and you're funny, and you're smart. When I first saw you- it was like a painting. I've been to the Louvre before- I never got it. I was never one for art. And then I saw you. You were a piece of art- you *are* a piece of art. I'm so scared of loosing you that I've lost myself. I'm so scared of loosing you that I... that I've made us loose what we could've been. And I'll never forgive myself for that. I had you ready to be framed. I don't..." He sniffed, "I don't even know."

George fell asleep to the monologue of a rant that John had prepared for him. He thought back to when they first met. John had been working at a café, George had caught his eye, and George had said, "Why not." Because he was an option. Because he was being wanted, and he could never say no to the request of a fuel to his shrivelled ego. He wanted to hear it- that he was wanted. That he was desirable. And John was his way to that. George fell asleep to words that he had theorised about from body language and slips of words during intimacy and fights. What was being said wasn't surprising. The thing that was surprising was the way that John was able to admit to it.

George fell deeper and deeper into a deep slumber, the place where his plot unclear and unprepared. In his dreams- he could see a rainbow more of colours. In his dreams, he was safe. Because it wasn't real. In this one, John was yelling muffled, unexplainable and messily strung together words that mirrored the ones he had spoken full of sorrow before George had fallen into this abstract world. It was almost comforting.

When George awoke, his boyfriend wasn't next to him. He awoke with the realisation that this wasn't working. He would rather be with the person who he hated the most in the world than stuck here, with someone he had known for a lot of time, sure- but who's soul didn't connect and intertwine with his truly.

So does he try and heal it or let it go?

He sat up in his bed, hair thrown wildy across his face. He slid on slippers and pulled open the door from their bedroom and walked into their kitchen slash living room, and the sweet smell of pancakes and baking decorated the atmosphere. George turned to see John, cooking.

Oh no. Pity wrapped around George's guts, he was begging him to stay. This was his attempt at retying the rope- getting them back. Being the happy boyfriend. He pitied the shell of a man before him, trying to get back what he never had.

He wished he still could pretend he didn't know.

He wanted to leave. He wanted to go to the band- to practice, to do *something* that wasn't pitying a twenty seven year old man trying to buy back his love.

George slid out his chair, sitting down, "Ahah, what's this?"

John flashed a grin at him. "Pancakes. You deserve it, baby. For your big trip."

George stared at him. Brown hair lazily pulled back, overgrown and full of grease. His manly features seemed overdone- undesirable. George wasn't even attracted to him.

They sat in their kitchen, John making lazy attempts at something that resembled a conversation. Pretending. It would be better if he wasn't pretending. It would be better if he was guilt tripping, or yelling- not this. Because with those, at least George was always in the right, and he knew that. Like this, George was the one breaking his heart. It hurt.

"How did you sleep?" George tried, cringing through his words.

"Uh," John laughed, "Alright? I actually woke up early for once." He turned his head to George. "For you."

"For me," George repeated into his coffee, avoiding his eyes. It was meant to be sweet, but tasted bitter. At least the pancakes were alright.

"So, uh," George said, "I- I kinda. Uh. Need to go to Will's- you know, just to like-"

"Oh, yeah," John said, smiling uncomfortable wide. "Totally- yeah. Go ahead."

George reached down to grab his phone, but John thought he was reaching in for a kiss, so intertwined their lips messily. George pulled back.

"Sorry, I was-"

"No. It's fine. Sorry, I shouldn't have.." John tapped his fingers against the wood of their table. "So- uh, you need to-"

"Get changed."

"Yeah. OK, have fun."

George laughed nervously, unsure of whether it was intended to be a joke or not. "Yup."

He closed the door behind him. Holy fuck, that was the worst experience of his life. Four months without that. Yeah, yeah- that's definitely a yes. He let out a breath he hadn't known he had been holding, the exhale letting out the wound up anxieties from just one conversation with the man he, in theory, should be in love with. He grabbed his phone, texting Wilbur to let him know that he was coming over.

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George arrived at Wilbur's house, and was greeted with cups of tea and talk of the weather, as though they weren't about to tour around America. It felt as though Wilbur and Nikki were easing him into the reality of it. George desperately wanted to bring up the conclusion he had come to about his boyfriend.

After being there for around fifteen minutes, Wilbur brought up the elephant in the room.

"George," Wilbur said, "We got a date for when we're gonna leave."

"Oh," George turned to him, "I hope it's soon."

Nikki blinked in surprise. "What?" She laughed.

"I don't want to be here anymore," George said, "I'm tired of it. I'm tired of being just OK. I'm tired of- I'm tired of John."

Saying it outloud was scary- and unexpected. Forcing it into conversation after they had just met

up. Nikki's gaze softened after he admitted it, eyes downy. She nodded, the gesture full of understanding. George smiled back. Wilbur's face was unreadable, until he was walking towards George and holding him to his chest in a hug. George didn't understand how they knew that it was hard- how they knew that he needed a hug and not teasing comments. He didn't really understand why he needed it either. Wilbur mumbled a quiet, "Proud of you" in his ear. George appreciated the gesture deeply, but didn't understand why.

George's usual awkwardness at being cared for seeped in, changing the subject quickly. "So, uh, what's the date?"

"Oh!" Nikki smiled, "Uh, well. Tomorrow."

George blinked, " *Tomorrow?* "

Wilbur laughed heartily, "Yeah, we're getting a private jet. It's *insane*. Their manager- Caroline has been emailing me so many details. I'll forward them to you. I had no idea not being under a label gives you this much paperwork."

George rolled his eyes. Obviously they weren't under a label- Wilbur had said it like it was a choice. He smiled. "A private jet, huh." He mumbled, a smile tugging at his lips. The shock factor of everything was slowly getting blurred.

"What, excited to see your sugar daddy?" Nikki grinned.

"What the *fuck*- he's- he's flying all of us out-" he started, feeling his face heating up. "You're so weird. That's- you're so weird. Also no, I don't think I'll get through it without punching him in the face."

"OK- you're *tiny*, George, not like it would do any damage," Wilbur chuckled, which made George hit him on the arm. Like he was any bigger.

"You're literally as skinny as me, you're just tall," George exclaimed. Nikki wheezed from the couch, covering her mouth with the paws of her sweater. "Besides- I aren't even short! I'm average height! It's not my fault you're fucking slenderman."

They laughed and laughed until it faded out into the soft sounds of wind outside, nobody speaking. George remembered the question he had came up with that morning, while eating undercooked pancakes.

"Is Tommy coming on tour with us?" George asked, turning to Wilbur.

"Yes, obviously," Wilbur said. "He's gonna drop out. He wasn't liking it anyway."

George felt his parental instincts kick in- thoughts of '*a seventeen year old shouldn't have to tour around America*' , but he bit his lip, keeping his mouth shut. He could tell Nikki was thinking the same thing. Wilbur sipped his tea.

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"Tomorrow?" John repeated, blinking at George. He could tell he was on the verge of snapping.

"Yeah, uh," George mumbled, avoiding his eyes. One day. "That's what works for his manager. I thought you were happy for me."

John stared at him, and George nearly flinched at his icy gaze alone. "Baby, tomorrow is our

anniversary. ”

Oh shit. Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit.

“Did you forget?” John asked, tone calm but edging on anger. *Yes.*

“No- of course not,” George lied, “I’m sorry. That’s- that’s why I was nervous about telling you.”
Not at all true.

John sighed, leaning forward and rubbing his forehead in disappointment. “I just. I had something planned.” He looked up at George, and he noticed that John’s eyes were red and watery. He was crying to his face this time. John wiped his eyes. “It was stupid. Whatever. Have fun with *Clay.* ”

He took one last glance at George, and slammed the to their bedroom. George heard his muffled cries from outside the door, and ignored them.

Chapter End Notes

omg is that.... dream content in the distance??? MAYBE???? also if you have something to say please comment it!! i dont care if its stupid i just really like seeing comments ahaha

So Much For An Anniversary

Chapter Notes

hi! oh my god i can't put into words how much the support in the comments i've been getting means to me. i don't know if it's still george's anniversary of streaming today in america but it is in my timezone so this is kinda ironic haha. just letting out a content warning for this chapter that it does include sexual themes (no actual smut, but very heavily implied) alcohol use, and puking (motion sickness, don't worry!), so if any of those could be hard for you to read, feel free to skip, though keep in mind there will be more graphic sex scenes later in the story ! ok, enjoy and again- thank you <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It was today. Already, it was today. George sighed into his palms. He had packed his late into the night, and awoke with eyes asking to be closed once more. This was supposed to be his anniversary, and he was going to meet the man he bonded with his boyfriend over hating. And he *wanted too*.

After his boyfriend had closed the door to their bedroom and not opened it, George had decided on sleeping on the couch. It reminded him of nights when he could still pretend, nights where John would lay his hands on him and make him sing. Last summer. He ran his hands over the fabric and thought of what could be. Of what they *should* be doing, theoretically, when they're not going to be seeing each other for four months. He felt discomfort even imagining it.

He needed to at least talk to him. He glanced at the door, ominous. He walked to it, making sure his footsteps were soft, undetectable. He tried listening for the faintest noise- mumbles, rustling of bedsheets, cries, even. He heard soft breaths, and George sighed in relief, unsure of why it was a good thing. To prove he was real? He was alive? The implications from his subconscious actions made a cold shiver run up his spine.

He stepped away from the door. It's OK. He's leaving today. It's OK.

George's eyes flew to the suitcase that was barely closed. His search history was lots of different variations of, *'What do I bring on a tour'* - none of which giving him a straight answer. Oh well, he could always buy more clothing if he runs out. He could buy fancy American brands, *oooh*. He smiled thinking about it. He checked the time. 8:15. They were leaving at 12:30.

Wilbur was texting George excitedly about his love for planes, how they were getting a *private jet* which would mean that he could talk to the captain. Nikki said she was looking forward to the champagne, which George definitely agreed with, giggling and liking the message. Twelve hours on a plane. Oh god. The nausea he knew was to come felt real as he pressed his middle and index finger against his adams apple.

He heard the door click open, and his eyes snapped to his boyfriend. He looked alright. George's eyes moved down to explore his body. Shirtless. Both of them knew that it felt like an inappropriate yet very appropriate time to have sex, so they looked at each other through slanted gazes- awkwardly almost. They attempted at casual conversation, but before George could guess, he was being pushed against their hallway wall, knees bent around John's back. It felt wrong. But John deserved it. It was what he needed. What was expected of George.

It had been weeks since George had let himself be touched like this, and John was ravishing in it. “God, you’re gorgeous,” he mumbled, “let’s never fight again, OK? How am I going to deal with four months without you.”

George had responded with a whine, messily colliding their lips. John kissed every inch of his body. Caressed every imperfection. George had forgotten how it made him feel like he was worth of wordshipping. Every kiss a promise that George wasn’t expected to return.

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“You had *sex* with him?” Nikki exclaimed in a whisper after John had left to use the restroom. They were at Wilbur’s parent’s house, where Tommy lived. His parents had been festering him about whether he has everything, crying over how he’s growing up, as parents do. Wilbur was standing outside on the porch, smoking.

“I- what?” George blinked, “That is *so* not your business. Also- I didn’t even mention it. I mean- we might not have, what even made you think that?”

“George got boned?” Tommy exclaimed from down the hall, which made Wilbur let out a “hah”, from outside, having been eavesdropping.

“N-”

“Yes,” Nikki interrupted. “You’re *such* a bad liar. Also- ‘*what made you think that*’ ? Because yesterday you were talking about how you guys were about to break up and now you-” They heard the flushing from the bathroom, and water running. George prayed he hadn’t heard that.

“We’ll talk about this later,” Nikki whispered threateningly.

Wilbur and John walked back in at the same time. Wilbur smelled strongly of cigarettes, grinning and John looked out of place and confused.

“Have you ever smoked, John?” Wilbur asked, fidgeting with his beanie as he sat down on his couch.

“Ahah,” John laughed nervously, “I.. uh. No. Neither George or I have.”

Wilbur’s eyes flashed to George. “George? Not *cigarettes*, maybe.”

John laughed nervously. He thought he was joking. The older members of the band glanced at each other, reminiscing on the College parties they used to go to. George rubbed his chin, grinning down at the beige carpet.

Tommy and Wilbur’s mother walked in, rubbing Tommy’s hair and warning him about *dangerous people* like his son hadn’t just been talking about all the weed he used to smoke. Tommy was in great hands, for sure.

Eleanor’s eyes landed on George, and gasped audibly. “God, you’re so *skinny* ! Your lover mustn’t be a fan of that.” She went to go grab some ‘food to fatten him up’, and everyone burst out laughing as soon as she left the room. *No, he doesn’t really mind it, actually*, George smirked.

He was given a delicious blueberry muffin which would obviously make him immediately get up to the average weight.

“You know, Wilbur questioned if he was homosexual for a bit there as well,” Eleanor said, sitting

down next to him on the couch. George's face lit up.

"Did he?" He smiled at Wilbur, who blushed hard and shoved his hands over his face.

"That did *not* happen!" He yelled, and then quickly scrambled to correct himself "N-not like that would be a bad thing if it did happen I wouldn't be ashamed of it, but I'm just saying."

"Well once, when he was a young boy, he was telling me about how he very much appreciated this male actors appearance," She said, slicing open her muffin and coating it in butter. She turned to George. "Gay men are gorgeous. Have I ever told you that you remind me of my husband?"

George had always been Eleanor's favourite, maybe just the idea that he kissed other men was intriguing to her- or maybe she wanted a gay best friend who was thirty years younger than her. George tried to ignore the strange microaggression-y vibes he got from it and just use it as an excuse to tease Wilbur. Wilbur's father dad definitely didn't respond with the same warmth to George, but they had both acted as if George was their third son, even though George never really wanted it.

-

They arrived at the airport half an hour early, the reality slowly sinking in. Wilbur was explaining the way that private jets worked in detail, "So, basically it's like a flying taxi. It will land in any empty area of the airport that it's requested to go to. The main pilot- or captain's name is Mia, and she's incredible because she's a younger, POC, female captain which is something you don't see often. It's actually a very racially segregating business-" George tuned out the rest, thought process moving to the idea of *its actually happening, we're actually leaving*. He could feel John's eyes on him, and when he went to return his gaze, he looked away, eyes glazed over. George had seen John cry more in the past week than in their entire two year relationship.

When they saw the plane land outside, and Eleanor had taken photos of them all together, talking about how '*punk*' they were (completely wrong subculture, but she tried), and her and Tommy both cried as they gave their leaving embrace. It was sweet.

"Wait, I'm just gonna say bye to John," He said to the band, who had started walking down the gate. They flashed him awkward smiles of '*Good luck*' .

He turned back to him. He had on a black denim jacket, and graphic tee that was tucked into blue jeans. It was the most fashionable thing he owned. It was sad, how George knew already that he wouldn't miss it. Wouldn't miss him in the slightest.

"John, I-" Before he could speak, big, strong arms wrapped around him. He felt John break down into his shoulder. George retaliated in surprise.

"Please," he cried, gasping for breath. "Please, don't go." He was full on ugly sobbing, thick tears running down his cheeks. "I.. I tried being the supportive boyfriend. I tried, because- because I thought it would make you love me," he inhaled loudly, choking on his tears. It was so messy. "But please. You don't want that. You don't-" He fell to his knees, sobbing into George's thighs, staining his jeans. Families were staring at them. George hated to admit it, but the main feeling he was experiencing was embarrassment.

He didn't know what to say, "I.. Uh," he laughed, nervously. "I do want to go." He looked down at the wreck of a man below him, stepping back, so that he was no longer grasping his calves. His fists closed, and he moved them down to the ground dramatically, curling into a ball. "Look, I... Uh. I think you need to see somebody. I'm- I'm not. I'm not fit to deal with this. I'm sorry."

John looked up. George refused to meet his eye contact.

“So you’re leaving?” John’s voice broke.

“I knew I was leaving a week ago, John.” He rubbed his cheek. John looked up at him, a wounded puppy. George continued, avoiding his gaze. “I’m sorry. Happy anniversary.”

“Happy anniversary.” He whispered back.

-

He had ordered a champagne. It was over, thank God.

“Did you break up with him?” Nikki asked, hushed leaning over to George’s seat as the plane took off. Wilbur sat across from them, still ranting to Tommy about planes.

“I, uh,” George said, tapping his forehead, “I… think so?”

“You think so?” She repeated.

“Uh,” George mumbled, turning to look out the window as they moved away from the land, up into the sky. Away from England, away from John. Away from this life. “He started crying, I told him that he needs a therapist, and I didn’t kiss him goodbye. So.” He tapped the seat divider.

“Oh, honey,” she said sympathetically, and before George knew it, he was crying too. Crying about a man he had been telling himself for the past few days that he didn’t love. She hugged him. The position was awkward considering the seats, but it worked. She hugged him as John became a speck in the distance, until the buildings that once towered over him grew small.

They stayed like that for awhile, before George’s champagne arrived, and they had to sit up. “You deserve it,” Nikki mumbled, which made George chuckle even though there wasn’t anything that humorous about it. “Do you wanna watch a movie?”

“Yeah,” he sniffled, wiping his nose with the back knuckles of his index finger. They scrolled through the options, George taking small sips of his champagne. It was until then that he realised he didn’t really know how to drink properly. He should by now.

“We could watch *The Notebook* ?” George asked, pointing it out.

Nikki quickly responded, “seeing you cry once hurts *enough*. We’ll watch…” She scrolled back up. “How about we watch *Clueless* ?”

“Basic.” George commented.

“OK, so a yes? Great!” She smiled, clicking on it and beginning to fill out the details that were needed for them to be able to watch it.

They got half way in before George started throwing his guts out into a paper bag. *He should’ve known- how could he have been this naive? Thinking he could get away with crossing half the world without puking.* He thought back to Eleanor, *so much for gaining weight.*

-

Around six hours in, after the puking had calmed down (for now), Wilbur and Tommy swapped seats to sit closer to them and they had decided on shit-talking Dream, George’s favourite subject. While on his plane. Drinking a whole lot of his company’s alcohol.

“He pisses me *off!*” George exclaimed through slurred words, completely hammered. “Have you *seen* how he talks about this ‘*new genre*’ that he’s going to have in his new album and how we ‘*match the vibe*’ - God, it’s so annoying. It’s actually horrible. I can’t wait till I can punch him in the face in real life.”

“Mhm!” Wilbur slurred, “Video tape it. Isn’t it crazy how he’s like.. A man?”

“So true,” Nikki agreed. Tommy looked severely uncomfortable.

“And you know that he uses his fans for money?” George exclaimed, which made them all nod in unison, “Like- I know its ‘*his job*’ or whatever- but like. They’re literally just numbers to him. It’s so crazy how self absorbed he is.”

“I mean,” Nikki said, “I aren’t like as much of a hater of him as you are. Like.. that one song? ‘*Drink me like wine*’?” She paused, knowing how offended George was going to be, “..Kinda good.”

“*What?*” George exclaimed, “I literally- you don’t have taste. Sorry, Nikki, you shouldn’t be in this band anymore.”

“Oh yeah!” Wilbur exclaimed, nearly hitting Tommy in the face with how wide he outstretched his arms, and quickly apologising to him through a laugh for it. “Are you- like.. An official *Disc* now?”

George hadn’t thought about that. It wasn’t as bad when Wilbur said the name of the bad- ‘*The Discs*’- what was bad was when he referred to each members as a single disc. Or when he said ‘are you a part of the rack’. Get it. Like disc rack. Ha-ha. That was cringeworthy. But even drunk George didn’t have the courage to tell him that.

“Uh.. I guess..?” He said, squinting his eyes. The band immediately erupted with cheers.

-

“Did you know that some planes can fly for more than five hours after their engine goes out?” Wilbur said, feet up in the air. It was nighttime now, the windows closed. The air hostess had given them sleeping masks, which only Wilbur was wearing.

George held the bag to his face and groaned, “I miss my *boyfriend*. ”

“No you really don’t,” Nikki responded with from the seat in front. She now had the burden of sitting with Tommy.

“Was the *bone* really that good?” Tommy turned to George, who went red and started stammering. Nikki burst out with laughter.

“I wanna fuck Mia,” Wilbur confessed, sleeping mask still halfway across his face.

“Please, the thing I least want to hear about right now is sex,” George said.

“Are we *there yet?* ” Tommy exclaimed, pulling his seat backwards so that it leant back into George’s.

“Ew- Get *off!* ” George said in disgust. He nearly retaliated with kicking the seat, before he remembered it was a first class private jet. Thank God he was computer engineer in the past, George thought, thinking about the costs of this.

“Yeah, no offense, man, but he might puke on you,” Wilbur laughed, pulling the mask over his eyes. That made Tommy immediately pull his chair forward.

George groaned loudly just thinking about puking again. “Why did you guys let me drink?” He whined.

“You let *us* drink,” Nikki corrected.

George rolled his eyes, and then paused. “Can we talk about Clay again?”

“*No!*” they all yelled in unison. It was worth a shot.

-

Getting off the plane was the biggest relief of their life. Finally being able to move again was hard, but he got used to it. Wilbur had spent the last few hours in the cockpit, talking to Mia. George rolled his eyes after finding that out.

As they got escorted off the plane, the realisation that *‘holy shit, I’m in America’* hit. Excitement bubbled in all of their stomachs.

“Wait- wait, wait.” George stopped them, “We are about to take our first step onto American land. Savour this.”

“Holy shit.” Wilbur said dramatically, holding his breath. Mia laughed at it. Tommy rolled his eyes.

As they walked up, into America, through the pavement, where the wind gushed loudly, up into the gate tunnel, everything seemed surprisingly foreign, as it always did when you went to a new country. Butterflies bubbled in George’s stomach as the realisation hit him that he’s going to be able to talk to Clay. To speak to him, and tell him.. Tell him how bad his music is. Tell him how much he hurt him. The familiar thought flew back to him, as it did on the night where he sat beneath the stars and played, undetectable cameras decorating the room. Staring at him. That he was helping his friend’s dreams come true. Wilbur was smiling, genuinely, and laughing, and giddily jumping- and George could just tell how much this meant to him. The thought hit him of- *‘he was going to remember this’*. It was daunting, yet thrilling. He knew it was true.

As he walked up the gate, he grew more and more hyper aware of how Clay was behind that door. Waiting for him. He would see him. All of the speeches he had prepared late at night when he couldn’t sleep running back to him, going over his head. He went over them in his mind. Everything he needed to say. He had waited so, so long for this moment.

But as Mia held open the door for them, he didn’t see him there. He saw a tall woman who he instantly identified to be the manager, Caroline, but no Clay. No Dream. No stupid rockstar clothing, no security guards holding fans back. No- of course. Because they were just some stupid fucking opening band that he had hired. Nobody goes to wait for some people you quickly grabbed for clout. Because he’s an asshole. The reminder of the words he had been saying for so long seemed to almost sting. Everything he had prepared for, the dramatic build up, falling down. Because that was all it was, a fantasy. Because no matter what, Clay would always be the dick who was so far above him. He would never have that main character moment- or at least not yet. George couldn’t tell if it was the alcohol that made him so disappointed by this fact. He looked back to the band. Nobody else seemed so surprised.

He cleared his throat. So Clay isn’t there. Waiting for him. He scoffed. Good.

Chapter End Notes

slightly longer chapter today! the band is in america LETS GO!!!! dream next chapter..... that feels so weird to say. as always, please comment your thoughts (preferably positive), i really love to see them. thank you for reading!

An Old Friend

Chapter Notes

hi!! so ok just a heads up for this chapter, caroline is captainpuffy- but i aren't sure of her boundries, so if she is uncomfortable with being in fanfiction, their manager is just a woman called caroline completely unrelated to puffy. as well as that, i realised that im going to have to change their age difference slightly- so dream is 23, and george is 24. just to make sure that the whole high school thing makes sense. also- caroline is captainpuffy and the band is the feral boys- incase that wasn't clear, but i'm actually not sure of puffy's boundries about being referred to with her real name/being in fanfiction in general,, so please tell me if she's uncomfortable with any of the way i am portraying her here! anyways enjoy!! dream is here!! yay!! :D

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Caroline was short, and George was surprised to find that she was two years younger than he was, with such a mature occupation. She was strict, but with a sense of humour and charisma to her that was easy to get along with. She wore a grey blazer, a white top, black skinny jeans, and immediately jumped into talk about where they're going to be going, what bus they will be on, what songs they would get to perform.

"We'll have a meeting tomorrow with Dream," She smiled, holding her notepad that she held at tucking it under her armpit. "As for now, get some sleep. You just went on a twelve hour flight-yikes. You guys are good. I've listened to your stuff. Nearly as good as Dream."

George could tell Wilbur was nearly pissing himself at the face he pulled after the 'nearly as good as Dream' - trying to be respectful but clearly wanting to snap her neck.

"I got you all enchiladas from that place over there- I know how a long flight is," She said, pulling four separate bags out from one bigger paper bag. It smelt like heaven. She brought them over to the seats by the shop that she got them at, and they sat down thankfully. God, he was so tired, and *so hungry*. As soon as he bit into the cheesy piece of heaven it melted against his tongue, and he was sure, in that moment that it must've been the best food he's ever eaten. They all groaned in unison, mumbling something along the lines of '*so good*' as he dug into the meal- not being half awake enough to care about what they looked like.

"So," she moved long, brown hair behind her shoulder, "I'm sure you've heard this, but I'm just gonna go over the basics of being your manager. I know technically I'm Dream's manager- but then that branches out to his backup band, if needed, backup dancers, entire orchestras if you saw *The Grammys* performance. And one of those branches is you guys. So for the entirety of the *Faceless* tour, I can get you guys whatever you need. It's my job. I manage your business." She smiled, "You're gonna be meeting up with the big man himself tomorrow, we have a meeting at 2:30pm at his house with all of the crew." Her eyes landed on George, "and a private meeting with you at 12."

George choked on his enchilada. *You've got to be kidding me.*

He coughed into his elbow, and then turned to her, letting out a croaky, "Uh. Why?"

She shrugged, “You tell me. Remember, I manage your shit. 12pm. Day time.” She pointed a finger at him, “Be there.”

George reluctantly nodded, forcing a smile. He could *hear* the band yelling at him in confusion based off facial expression alone.

She leaned back in her chair, “So, saying that. Is there anything you guys need me to manage?”

George’s mind immediately flew to the obvious thing- his mess of a love life, but was pretty sure that’d be off the table. Wilbur immediately spoke, “Uh, I wouldn’t mind a smoke right about now.”

She laughed heartily, and then went, “Oh, you’re gonna like Dream.”

George hated it.

She then led them out to the taxi that was parked outside, waiting for them- giving them no time to check any of the very American shops and stalls littered around the airport. While walking, she discussed the basic financial business with Nikki and Wilbur while Tommy and George walked behind, Tommy not shutting up about *how good* those enchiladas were. As they reached the taxi, the man opened the door for them, a reminder of just how in deep in this shit they were. Caroline leaned down, arm above the door and told them to have a good rest, and that they’d be staying at a hotel for the week before the tour started. It did not feel real.

As soon as the door closed, Wilbur smirked, smacking George’s shoulder and saying what they’d all been wondering, “A *private* meeting?”

Nikki nodded vigorously, “What the hell does that mean? *Private meeting* - that is so.. Weirdly worded, George,” She smirked.

“It’s what she said!” George exclaimed defensively, “It’s not my fault that he wants to do it!”

“Are the sugar daddy jokes still jokes?” Nikki asked, gasping. And for some reason, it was the funniest thing they had all heard in months, and started banging the side’s of the poor taxi driver’s car. George felt lightheaded at how hard he was laughing and at how he was so, so, so tired.

They basically fell out of the car, staggering into it like the obnoxious europeans they were. Wilbur held the small square piece of paper that had been given to them by Caroline with their hotel details, barely making it up to the front desk without bursting out into laughter. His hands shook at he handed it to the woman behind the counter, all of them having their palms up to their mouth to stop them from laughing. They were given keys and quickly escorted into rooms 150 and 151. They did paper scissors rock to find out who would share a room with who, and George ended up with Tommy, leaving Nikki with Wilbur. It was a two bed, thank God, and the moment George arrived, he slung his bag to the side of the room and collapsed face down on his bed with a groan, falling into immediate sleep.

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“Wake up! Wake up, wake up, wake up!” George woke up to Tommy hitting him with a pillow relentlessly. A slight hangover lingered in the back of George’s mind, left ear ringing. He still felt so fucking tired. He groaned, sitting up.

He made bland conversation with Tommy, going into their bathroom, grabbing a handful of clothing and going into the bathroom. It took until when he caught his reflection to remember exactly what George was preparing for- to see Clay.

He was going to see Clay. Clay asked to see him, in private. After 7 years. He was seeing the boy who tormented him throughout one year of his time as a teenager.

He was 16 when it was announced that Clay Johnson was joining their school for a leap year in England, some rich boy rolling in daddy's money from the states. Clay was 15. And he got everything he fucking wanted. His grunge-like appearance pissed off George, the way he could get straight A's while smoking in the bathrooms and dating five girls every five month. They weren't in the same class, but he was all you would hear about. *Clay, Clay, Clay.*

That was how it started. Normal, teenage jealousy- George had assumed that he had only envy for his smooth voice, the way his hands were strong, and big. At least he had thought it had been jealousy, until he went through self discovery- before he realised some things about himself. He realised the way that he started to go out and watch his football games just to see the way his shirt would ride up when he pushed all of his weight onto the other player, completely throwing them- it wasn't jealousy. It was so embarrassing, but 16 year old George had a bad crush on Dream.

And then, Clay decided to join the debate club. Because he was a fucking barstard. Because of course- *of course*, this immediately prompted George to join because he was fucking whipped. Because it was his only chance to get to talk to him, considering the fact he was a class below him. And Clay was better than him and it was *hot*. The way he could twist and play with words to make you change your mind- though George would have agreed with anything he had said.

He had been alone with him, in this stupid Maths classroom, around two months into the year. And George had thought that they had something. George had fucking humiliated himself. Clay had laughed in his face- and told everyone. Everyone at that shitty all boys school. Clay made his school life a living hell. George wished the story was more original- that there was something more interesting to it other than the fact that he liked a boy, and then got beat up for it. He hated how stereotypical it was, how dumb it made him sound to complain about.

But Clay got nothing in return- no karma, no, the fucking opposite. Of course Clay got first class seats in life. Of course he got fans, and a shitty jump start into his career that was so unfair and a perfect reputation. Because how couldn't he.

And George was going to see him. Because he wanted to see him.

What the fuck would even happen? Would he go and just get called slurs, and made fun of- or an actual fucking apology? He didn't even want that- because then he would have to accept it and pretend like he was a good person. Accept it because he's above him, because he's expected to get everything fucking easy.

George stared at his reflection in the mirror, the way his hair was overgrown and pushed forward, shirt saggy and oversized. He looked tiny. He looked cute. He scoffed at the thought, throwing water over his face to wash it, which just enhanced the image of some cute British twink- exactly the image he *didn't* want when meeting someone who hates you for that reason. He slid on the pants he had grabbed.

As the sun crept in through the windows, he took note of just how fucking hot it was in Florida. The humidity inside was already hotter than it had been in years in his small apartment in London.

He was going to meet Dream. Clay. Whatever you would call him- he was going to see him in front of him, in real life. Flesh and bone After so long of making fun of him, and ridiculing him from across an ocean he was finally going to see him in real life. He was scared, but he hated to admit it. Scared of being laughed at.

-

George arrived at the house, shakily standing outside the door. 12. It was a fucking mansion- house his *arse*. How he was one year younger than him and a millionaire George could never wrap his head around. It was your typical famous home- why it was in Florida, George didn't understand. He was obnoxious and self obsessed enough to live in LA like all of the other famous bithes. It expanded largely, made of clay (ironic), giving almost a futuristic look to it. There had been a long pathway that descended up to it, with precisely placed trees decorating the driveway. It was so... well kept. So perfect. Like everything in his life. Everything he got was always perfect, always easy. It wasn't fucking fair.

Knock. Just knock. Just do it.

Nervousness flooded his guts. At least he got to punch Clay's door. He hit it around four times, before shoving his hands back in his pocket. He wanted to run, go back to London, where this was only a fantasy- where he didn't have to deal with the actual fact that he is meeting Clay again, and is going to be stuck with him.

Why did he agree to this. Go home.

He heard footsteps from the door. George's heartbeat quickened. Go home, go home. You don't have to see him. Go back to John, he loves you. He needs you. Go back to him, and-

The door flung open.

And there he stood, Clay Johnson. Dream. His highschool stupid fucking crush, grown up and real. He looked so fucking perfect it was annoying. One strand of blonde hair strung over his forehead, loose, the rest pushed back- intentionally messy. He had green, almond shaped eyes, below thick yet defined eyebrows. A slit ran through the one on his left. Great. Soft freckles littered high cheekbones, and God- his skin was so untextured and smooth- George wanted to punch him. Because he didn't deserve that. You could just *tell* by looking at him for a second how up his own ass he was. And it was so fucking humiliating how George had to look up to him. How he had no choice but to let him look down at him- and fucking smile. Smile like he didn't hurt him. Smile like he was aloud to pretend like he was a good person.

"George," he breathed, nearly sighing the word.

George glared at him, refusing to answer. What a fucking bastard.

"I- uh," he fumbled with his words, opening his door, "Come in, come in! I just bought this place, incase you didn't notice. The renovation like- just finished, and we're about to go on tour."

George glanced around at the expensive interior of his entryway, and was greeted with a victorian-style painting hung on the wall. A young girl, sat on a tree trunk, looking up at the viewer with an oversized bonnet tied to her head. Clay pointed at it.

"Oh, aha, cool, right?" He said, and when George stayed silent, he awkwardly continued, "It's, uh- Martin Beek. It's called '*A Child's World*' ." He shrugged, "My mom really liked it."

George paused, biting his tongue. Words full of fury that he had planned fell flat, suddenly not feeling appropriate. He turned to him, "Why are you acting like we're friends?"

Clay blinked. "What?"

“Why are you acting nice,” George repeated, “Why do you want me here. You’re a dick, you don’t have to pretend. I know.”

Clay looked hurt, expression softening. Fuck you. Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you.

“I’m not a dick,” he said, “I just wanted to talk, I guess. Catch up.”

He wanted to hit him. He wanted to so fucking bad. “What the fuck?” George whispered, voice full of spite, moving past him into the oversized living room that connected to the entryway from the left. He didn’t have time to take in the surroundings, just pissed off.

“What?” Clay blinked, “I’m sorry, did I do something?”

“Did you do something?” George asked, quiet. “Did you *do something*?” He spun around to face Clay, holding up a finger accusingly, voice raised. “Was telling me to kill myself for being gay not enough? Was humiliating me in front of the entire school- does that mean *nothing* to you?!”

Clay stared at him, and quickly furrowed his brows, answering quickly and defensively, “That was like seven years ago! Maybe I- I dunno, wanted to make up? Wanted to fucking apologise?” He stared him down, “I was trying to ease you into this but if we’re talking about it immediately, sure, I’ll do that.”

George stared at him, coming up with a quick and lazy response, “Well do it then.” He stopped, remembering the train of thought he had had earlier that morning. “Actually- no. Don’t, because I don’t want your fucking apology because no matter what you say, I am not going to accept it. I don’t like you. I don’t like your music, you have a joke of a career, and you’re untalented.”

Dream stared at him, “Well if you’re not even going to try and listen to me, how am I supposed to like you?”

“I don’t want you to like me,” George rolled his eyes. *Obviously*.

“That’s cute,” Clay rolled his eyes, walking passed him and falling down onto his seat. “Why are you touring with me then?”

“Why- why are you calling me cute? You say you hate gay people and then you fucking flirt with me?” George exclaimed. *That’s cute*. The comment rolled over and over in his mind, replaying.

“I don’t fucking hate gay people, idiot,” Clay said, fake kindness completely having left his tone. He opened his mouth to say something else, but George cut him off.

“Also, I have a boyfriend, sorry,” George said, pettily, “I know that must be *such a shame* for you, Clay.”

“*What?*” Clay exclaimed, “I- I don’t- *what*. You’re the one who’s in love with me. Also, don’t fucking call me Clay.”

“I just told you, Clay, I have a boyfriend,” George repeated, unsure of the truthness of the label.

“Poor guy,” Clay said through clenched teeth. “What, do you like, love him, or something?”

“Well, duh,” George said, “Why do you sound so sad about it, fruity?”

“Shut the fuck up.” Clay said, falling down onto his oversized couch.

“You’re the one who invited me,” George responded, smirking. “For *two hours*. What did you

even want to do?"

Clay rolled his eyes, scoffing into his palm, "Like you could last that long."

George raised his eyebrow, crossing his arms, "Is that a challenge? Why are you thinking about how long I'd last in bed, Clay? Do you like me, or something?"

Clay rolled his eyes, glaring at him. "You fucking wish."

"So," Clay threw his head back against the couch, messing up his dirty blonde hair. George's eyes were glued to the way his adam's apple bobbed- Up. Down. The way his eyes slid to George's and the side of his mouth twitched up into a smirk. George swallowed. "You showed up on time."

"What?" George said, confused.

Clay adjusted in his seat. God, everything he did just full George with uncanny rage. He wanted to hit him. He was so obviously full of himself. It was horrible.

"It's good," Clay said, casually, "You have so much talk, but you'll show up on time like a good boy. Like you need to please me." He looked up at George from staring at his fingernails- looked deep into his soul. "I like that."

George's face flushed, avoiding Clay's gaze. Something he normally didn't do for that reason. He looked back at him. "I don't like you."

"You said," Clay shrugged. George wanted to punch him in the face.

"No- you don't get it." He almost laughed. This is it, George. This was his moment. It was his moment- but his voice quivered, and he had to put all of his energy into making sure his hands didn't shake. This was his moment- though, none the less. "I hate you. And I am not going to tiptoe around that. You made my highschool hell. I couldn't- I.." every speech he had planned toppled over his mind, so all he could do was clench his fists and repeat, "I hate you."

He hated the way Clay's face seemed genuinely sympathetic, before flashing back to a smirk. He stood up, wandering up to where he stood. "Well, that must suck, because I'm in charge of you for the next four months. I get to decide where you go. I get to decide what you do." he grinned at him. "Almost kinky. I dunno."

"You're a fucking asshole," George managed, finally letting go of his gaze. "A two faced asshole."

"You agreed to come here."

"I can leave."

"But you don't really want to do that, do you?"

George hated the way he was right, and he didn't even fucking know. He hated how that was a good fucking point, that left him dead silent. Because he was supposedly in love with his boyfriend, and being vulnerable with the man in front of him would probably be his worst fucking fear. He always was a good debater.

"Oh , you want to stay with me," Clay crossed his arms, hitting the nail on the head.

"No," George scoffed, "I'm using you for clout, dumbarse. This is a career opportunity. You

invited *me* to come on this tour and *my* band, and it's us who are going to be the highlight of every show."

"The band you're in, maybe," Clay rolled his eyes, "Not you."

"What the fuck does that mean?"

Clay stared at him, "Pretty privilege can't get you talent, Georgie."

What the fuck.

"So you're calling me pretty?" George responded, which made Clay's face flush pink for a second.

"Surprised? I'm sure you don't get that a lot from your *boyfriend*."

George stared at him, "Where the *fuck* do you get off?"

Clay smirked, face smug. "Not on you, that's for fucking sure. Sorry."

"I- good?" George stuttered on his words. He only then realised just how close their faces were, how he could see the freckles that lined his face. He stepped back. What the fuck. "How long do I have to be here for, again?"

Clay blinked at him, "Well, I was going to be fucking nice and offer you some food and wine, but with this attitude you may as well leave. Go and talk to your boyfriend or something. Leave my house."

"So much for being nice to me," George smiled. "I'll fuck him over the phone for you."

"Like you're a top," he smirked.

George nearly hit him for real that time. Nearly hit him in the chest, in his chains that hung from his neck. He had over accessorized, overdressed. George hadn't really taken in his clothing choices, how they teetered on androgyny.

If that taught him anything, it taught him that Clay has not changed one fucking bit. That he was right. That these next four months are going to be fucking hell.

"Where the *fuck* are you?" Wilbur's voice was hushed, yet angry in a lighthearted way. George grinned at his phone.

"Uh," George glanced around, staring down at the meal in front of him, "I dunno the name, but a sushi place."

"*Why*-"

"Well, y'know, there's not really any authentic east asian places in London, so," He stuffed another sushi roll in his mouth, "Ugh, you were right, it's so good."

"No," Wilbur said, slower. "Why aren't you at the meeting? You were supposed to-"

George rolled his eyes. He knew this was where it was heading. "Because *Dream* is a dick. And I was right- I'm sure you've realised by now."

Wilbur sounded exasperated, "You cannot be serious."

“Look, he was the one who kicked me out!” George said, leaning forward in his chair, waving around his chopsticks expressively as he spoke.

“Why the fuck is he calling us unprofessional because you *left* then?” Wilbur exclaimed.

George stopped. “He’s *what*.”

“He’s- he’s telling us off, but in a fucking humiliatingly kind way, for something you did!” Wilbur exclaimed, the conversation feeling less lighthearted. “They’re saying that you must be the liability of the band!”

George clicked his tongue. “What a fucking bitch.”

“What?”

“He- he kicked *me* out, so he’s trying to frame me for-”

“Well, come back now! You need to be here!” Wilbur said, phone line clicking off as he hung up. George was about to say- ‘*I don’t have a car*’ but he guessed he could just order a taxi. He looked down at his half eaten meal sorrowfully.

It took him an entire hour to order the taxi, finish his meal, pay, and be driven back to the house. George would be lying if he said he didn’t slightly take his time just to piss off Clay. What a *dick*, by the way- pretending like he was the one who left randomly. What a dick.

As the car pulled into his driveway, George was reminded yet again of just how fucking nice his house was, thinking back to three hours ago. Now, with a lot less anxiety, he knocked on the door.

This time, the person who opened it was the same height as George, with pale skin, and long, black hair. “Oh!” She said. She had somewhat of a baby voice, it was nice. She continued, “Are you George?”

“Uh,” He scratched his head, “Yeah.”

“Great, great-” She turned back to the room that George and Clay had fought in hours earlier. “-He’s here!” she turned to George, smiling, “Oh, come in! I’m Tina, I’m Dream’s personal hair stylist, and I also help with like the sound-tech stuff occasionally.”

George shook her hand, stepping in awkwardly. He was greeted with *A Child’s World*, as he was last time. Again, he ignored the shoe rack, and walked directly into the living room. He took in the bohemian furniture, glancing at the chair that Clay had sat in hours before, now full with a whole crew worth of people. Clay sat at the end of the room, against a wall, smirking at George.

“Where have you been?” Caroline exclaimed. Oh *fuck you*.

“I- I,” The entire room looked at him expectedly. The band looked pissed. “Cl- Dream asked me to leave? I’m got the idea that he didn’t want me to come back.”

Dream raised an eyebrow innocently, “What are you talking about? I think I deserve an apology, at least. You had two jobs, it’s not that hard.”

The room murmured in agreement.

“Oh-” George bit his lip, holding back an insult. He let out a sigh. He couldn’t believe he had to say this. He looked to his feet. “I- uh. Clay, I’m sorry.”

“Say it to my face,” He said, holding back a grin. “And don’t call me Clay.”

“Dream,” George glared at him, “I’m sorry.”

“Good.”

George stared at him as he moved to sit down with his band, who looked fucking disappointed at him. Because now, they put *Dream’s* word before his. What the hell.

“Anyway,” Tina said, “As I was saying-”

“Tina, I want you to style George’s hair as well,” Dream interrupted.

“*Why?*” George stared at him.

“Because it looked cute this morning, and now I don’t like it,” He said, “There’s a really specific way I want your hair done- Tina, I’ll show you the photos. I’ll pay for George’s specially.”

What.

Tina blinked at him, nodding, “Oh, sure! That’s really sweet of you. So, should I do his earlier, or...”

“You really don’t have to,” George cut in, smiling at her.

“It wasn’t an offer, George,” Clay grinned. “Tina, it doesn’t matter the time, all that matters is we spend time together.”

“What?” George said, “I- you *hate*-” he blinked, “Uh, okay.”

He sat there, for the little time they had left in the meeting, going over the very ending of how the stage would be laid out. The entire time, Clay would continuously direct everything back to George. To what? To humiliate him? George didn’t understand his thought process- didn’t understand *why*. His words had been strung together- smug, all knowing, superior. And the way that the entire room fell for it, fell for two-faced charisma. It was bland, honestly. The meeting only lasted fifteen minutes or so before it ended, everyone being told that they could go to their respective homes, or stay for a drink.

“I’ll stay,” George perked up, a grin plastered to his face. He could play at this game. Clay turned to him.

“What?” Ah. Now he’s the one questioning.

“You’re right,” George smiled, “I want to stay with you, talk. And you made food for me, didn’t you? It’d be a shame for it to go to waste.”

Clay blinked at him. “Okay.”

“Okay,” George smiled. He didn’t exactly know *why* he wanted to stay- for the rush of euphoria he would get whenever he proved himself to Clay? It was addicting, almost- their sharp words. Fun to ridicule him. And he wasn’t going to let himself *loose*. To leave, being made fun of for fifteen minutes- no. Of course he’ll stay.

His band spun him around immediately.

“What the *fuck*?” Nikki whispered, almost menacingly.

“What?” George smiled, tapping his chin, feeling at the lack of stubble. “I turned up.”

“Yeah- one *hour* late,” Wilbur cut in. He looked at George disapprovingly.

“Well, can you blame me?” George responded, “I mean, you *saw* how much of a dick he was being to me, right?”

Tommy, surprisingly, was the one to speak. “I dunno, man. Sounded more like you were flirting, honestly.”

The band murmured in agreement. George blinked. *Flirting?* What?

“No- we weren’t-” He glanced back at Clay, stood, talking to what George had assumed to be his backing band. Their eyes met for a second, and Clay’s smile rose to a smirk. George glared, looking away. “*What?* ”

“Yeah, definitely,” Nikki agreed. George rolled his eyes. They were not flirting. George was the only one in the band who had an actual love life, so for them to assume that- when they didn’t even have lovers? Silly, honestly.

George wandered over to the band. There sat three men other than Clay, all with varying appearances, though George was sure they would share the same bland personality. He sat down next to Clay, grabbing a grape from the stool seated next to the chair, and plopping it in his mouth.

Clay turned to him. “Don’t eat that.”

“I’ll eat what I want,” George stared back, having already missed the easy ping-pong of insults. “You made it for me, as well.”

“OK, OK, calm down,” One of the boys said. He had overgrown brown, curly hair, and a jumper on that looked second-hand, and old, yet stylish. He had various pearls and other assortments of jewelery on, George noticed one that matched ring to Clay’s especially. Like Clay as well, he had his nails painted, though his were painted much brighter, varying colours. He gestured to where George sat. “Hey, it’s George, right?”

George nodded.

“I’m Karl,” he grinned, “I saw that video of you on the keyboard- so cool. And it’s not, like, a common instrument used in bands in general, so it’s so cool to see. Just your entire band, so sick, man.”

“Don’t boost his ego,” Clay murmured. George was unsure of how to take the praise, considering the fact that he was clearly just another one of Dream’s many yes-men. Though, it was a particularly nice thing to point out, so he mumbled a ‘thank you’.

“So, are you guys, like, Dream’s backing band?” Wilbur cut in, having been eavesdropping from behind the couch. The one seated next to Karl nodded.

“Yeah, aha,” He had a much more grunge look to him, very reminiscent of the way Clay styled himself in his smudged eyeliner, and dark clothing, though going slightly further, unafraid to push more boundaries. Dark hair spilled out from under a blacker beanie, matching almost with Wilbur, though he, of course, didn’t have such an extreme appearance. His voice was decorated with a slight accent, “We’re the band for Dream! I do guitar along with Dream, uh, Karl does drums, and Sapnap-” He pointed to the man sat next to Clay, who almost looked like a bodyguard, “-He does bass.”

“Cool,” Wilbur breathed, clearly intimidated, “Uh, you said, ‘*with Dream*’ - do you play as well?”

Dream stared up at him, “Did George not tell you?”

George scoffed, “Like I talk about you.”

Wilbur rolled his eyes. “You do though, all the time.”

Clay bit back a smirk. George hated him. He slid a knife through some brie, and placed it onto a cracker that was laid out on the platter of snacks in front of them. He groaned loudly at the taste, the way it melted in his mouth.

“Don’t- ew,” Clay commented, stuttering, “T-that’s.. Nobody wants to hear you *moan*. That’s, oh my god, ew.”

George stopped, mouth full of cheese. He noticed a slight pink to his cheeks, “Are you *blushing*?”

Clay stared at him, “What- no. I mean, yeah, because you just moaned, and I don’t want to hear th-”

“We get it, you don’t hear moans often,” George sighed, shrugging, which made Snapnap? George couldn’t help associate his name with *Snapchat*. Whatever his name was- he laughed, and George fucking hated it, because it made it seem like he was in on some sort of joke that they had. George glared at him, continuing to eat.

“*God*, do you have to eat that loud?” Clay exclaimed. “It’s so fucking irritating.”

“Kick me out again, then,” George grinned at him. Now he was the one who was being irritating, who was getting in the way of his life, embarrassing him, and it felt like a victory.

“Wait- uh,” Sappnap spoke, voice low and slurred. He nudged Clay on the shoulder, “You have a grand piano down the hall, do you wanna play something George?”

Clay scoffed, while George was left taken aback. “Uh,” he spoke, clearing his spoke, “Like, play what?”

“Anything, I’d just like to hear,” Sappnap smiled, getting up. All of their band started festering him to ‘*Go on, play! Play something!*’ whereas Clay stayed at the couch, glaring at them. Yeah, George was about to play on his piano better than it’s ever been played. Must suck.

He was pushed down the hall, into an even larger room with a bar, and large, glass, sliding doors, that led to a pool outside. He really was rich. In the middle of the room sat an impressive grand piano, a round rug sat beneath it. It was nice, George had to admit. He sat down on the stool, feeling against the polished wood with his fingertips, and adjusted in his stool, thinking over what piece to play.

Tchaikovsky - Romance in F Minor, Op. 5 - Sviatoslav Richter Piano, was what he settled on, a beautifully haunting and emotional piece. The room went silent as the notes played, honest. Romantic, sad, soft, however interpretation they made of it, the music shifted and transformed. The type that least you breathless, softness and femininity of the keys tapping softly, echoing throughout the high walls. His fingers slipped against the chords, pale, small hands, stretching out to each note. He got to the transition, and cut off, unsure, and the room erupted in claps. It felt nice. He looked back at them, about to announce that it wasn’t actually finished, and saw Clay stood in the doorway, staring at him in wonder. He immediately brought his gaze to his feet. But George saw.

"It's not done-" George spoke, "Uh, it has this bit, it, like-"

The song became more fast-paced, playful almost, while dark, and low. He couldn't help but wonder, as his fingertips pressed and dances across black and white keys, if Clay was still listening. If Clay could hear the meaning behind wordless music. If he was shocked by it- as someone who was so untalented. If he.. If he liked it.

As the piece faded out, softer, he looked up, glancing around the room, and of course, Clay was gone. Everyone clapped, regardless. George smiled bashfully.

-

George lay against his bed, head propped up against the frame. He was reading some book he had decided to bring- his father, of all people had gifted it to him. Something about unrequited love. George's mind flashed back to John. How he should be calling him. Surprisingly- George's recent calls had been mainly work related. John seemed to be pulling back, almost. George didn't know whether to feel discomforted or happy for him.

Tommy sat across the room. "How are you *reading*?"

"I'm feeling artsy," George joked, readjusting in where he laid. Tommy gaped at him.

"How- look, George, I've been out of school for, like," He counted on his fingers, "Two weeks. I've already promised myself that I'm never going to do anything school-like ever again."

"Ever again?" George repeated, and Tommy responded with a nod. George knew he wouldn't be able to get away with that. "Oh yeah- how are you liking not being at school?" He lay his book down, sitting up, "God, I would've done *anything* to drop out of school when I was your age."

"Yeah, because you're *so old*," Tommy commented, which made George scoff. He wasn't used to being the old one, after spending his life predominantly with John for so long.

"I guess I am," he smiled.

"But yeah, it's *amazing*!" Tommy exclaimed, "I'm like- I'm an adult now. I'm in Florida- which is *insane*, it's like- holy fuck."

His speaking patterns reminded George of Wilbur, one of the many reminders that they grew up in the same household. George nodded, leaning back against the bedframe.

"You were really good at the piano," Tommy continued, "Like- I've never really noticed, before. How good you are."

"You're good too," George said. Tommy nodded, and guilt poured into George's veins for letting himself let this kid's childhood be ripped from him. He was a good kid. He didn't need the pressure of touring with *Dream*, with everyone expecting from him what he gave in his very best performance. He was talented- of course, so, so, talented- his ability at such a young age was beyond impressive. But that didn't mean he needed to be used for profit off of it.

George frowned, and turned over to his left side, "Goodnight Tommy."

"Goodnight George," He said. He then cut himself off- "Oh yeah, it's good to know that *Dream* is as obsessed with you as you are with him."

George immediately sat up. "What?"

“Yeah,” Tommy exclaimed, “He wouldn’t shut up about you. Even when you were there. It was horrific.”

George let out a chuckle, laying back down into his bed, “Goodnight Tommy.”

“Goodnight George.”

George turned off the light with a gentle *click*, the room suddenly being full with darkness. George let the grin creep to his cheeks.

He wouldn’t shut up about you.

Chapter End Notes

that was so fun to write oh my godddd. also, i just thought i'd say that i won't be able to update as frequently as i have been doing for these past, my school has been on a break for a week with no work, so it might be more like weekly or more, im sorry! not necessarily, though, who knows i might be able to balance it.
and, since this is getting some attention, for now, please no reposts, and of course, (though it doesn't have nearly enough traction for this to be something to worry about) don't ask ccs to read!
as always, comments are so, so so appreciated, thank you for all of the support <3

Gifts

Chapter Notes

hi,, incase you didn't notice i merged chapter 7 and chapter 6 considering they were both set in the same day, i'm sorry if that removed your comment ahaha!! i literally couldn't wait to start including the feral boys so like half of this chapter is just them and george bonding LOL enjoy the new chapter seven!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Slipping into the schedule of living in America had proven to be somewhat OK- they would wake up, go their studio, and practice. George had grown closer to Clay's backing band, though he hated to admit it. *The Discs* would have to leave whilst they were packing up to prepare, so it was hard to avoid seeing them. And for the first two days, at least, Clay was always late.

"Where's Dream, then?" Tommy had said, "off with his famous friends doing famous people things? That's quite rude."

Sapnap had laughed, "He's- uh, we do the first two songs without him. It's like a warm up for the instruments. So, he comes late."

What a dick, George thought, nitpicking to find any flaws in that. He comes late? He should be around to help his band prepare! To be there for them.

"Hey," Sapnap said, while they had been practicing a song called '*gone*' in which George joined in with an acoustic guitar. "You can play guitar as well?"

He stared down at the instrument hung over his shoulders feverishly, mumbling a, "Barely."

Wilbur cut in, "I taught him some in University, but it's been *ages* since you've played. He just picked it up again recently."

The nights flashed back to him, drunkenly begging Wilbur to teach him because he was obsessed with some silly song that had a guitar peace. He'd learnt that, and the basic chords, but that was it.

"Yeah, and Wilbur also knows piano," Nikki said.

That was something he knew well. When George had first asked him, he assumed it would be the same stereotype about British mothers forcing their children to play, as most do, but to his surprise, Wilbur was self taught.

Wilbur immediately went on to tell the story, reading George's mind, "I taught myself when I was like- 5. I just heard *The Nutcracker* on the radio, and recreated it until it sounded correct."

"Woah, so you were like- a prodigy?" Alex, the only one who hadn't introduced himself at the meeting, asked. Wilbur shook his head modestly, even though George knew he was.

"Well, I don't know about *prodigy*-"

" 'Well, I don't know about-' " Karl mocked lightheartedly. "You were, you can say it, dude."

Wilbur flushed, even though he'd been told that many times before. It took George aback occasionally, just how much of a main character he was. How it seemed like he was born to play, born to be blessed with fame. Not in the way that Clay was- where he was handed it on a silver platter without working- but in the way that he was such a classic story of pure talent. It reminded George why he was here. He grinned proudly, as his friend continued to ramble on with the other band about how exactly they started playing.

"I'd love to hear you guys play," Nikki said softly.

"Well, I dunno about that, champ," Karl giggled. "We- uh, we're practicing songs from Dream's new album. So, uh."

"Oh, right!" Wilbur said, "When's it coming out again? Like, a week?"

"I don't know about you Will, but if you're touring with someone I think that you should know when his album is coming out," Tommy said.

"What- do you?" George giggled. Tommy glared at him.

"Wow, not knowing when *Faceless* is coming out? Get with the times, boys! Who *are* you?" Karl joked.

"It's the 5th," Sapnap cut in. "Y'all should be invited to the listening party. It's gonna be insane. Get ready to get fucking shit-faced."

A party dedicated to Dream? George couldn't wait.

"You know," Alex had said whilst they were packing up. "You're actually kind of... shy when Dream's not around."

"Shy?" George repeated. It had been a word used to describe him for the majority of his life, though he had never put much thought into not being seen as shy. That implication was much more surprising than his other words.

"Yeah," Alex grinned, "Sorry- is that bad to say?"

"Yes, actually," George said, tone lined with sarcasm, "I'm incredibly offended. You need to apologise right now."

"Oh, George!" Alex played along, doing a horrible, high-pitched british accent. It sounded more like Mickey Mouse. "I'm so, so sorry! You're not shy at all, you're loud and obnoxious!"

"Why-" George laughed, "Why are you a british apologizer?"

"So I can speak your language, I dunno?" Alex giggled.

They got along like that for the first few days, until it started to teeter more on lighthearted bullying with how hard they were joking with each other.

"Oh, my God," Alex joked, when it was only them and George, "Nobody *cares*, George!"

"Nobody!" Sapnap cut in.

"Remember when you guys were nice to me?" George sighed dramatically, leaning further down into his chair. "Just as two-faced as Clay."

“Why do you call him that?” Karl asked through giggles, “*Clay*. Just call him Dream.”

“It’s such a dumb name, though!” George exclaimed. “He’s not- he’s not a ‘*dream*’. It’s so dumb, and self-absorbed, just like him.”

He didn’t know exactly why he insisted on it, maybe just the reminder that he knew him, better than anyone else, before all of this. Or, that he was above him, so wouldn’t treat him with enough respect as to use the name he had chosen for himself.

“Hey,” Alex said, “Y’know he’s like- our friend.”

George blinked. “Uh. Sorry.”

He wasn’t. Not even in the slightest. That was the difference between them that reminded George that he couldn’t let himself grow close to them. Become friends with Dream’s yes-men. The idea was humiliating- having stood so tall with the claim that he wouldn’t associate himself with Dream in anything that lingered on positive- and now was befriending his bandmates, people who chose to work for him. Or the title Alex had thrown around, his friends. The link between them was embarrassing. The idea that if he were to slip up, say something a little too honest, they could repeat it back to Dream.

“How long have you known Dream?” He asked when he was alone with Sapnap, only then realising once the word had left his mouth that he had begun to think of Clay using his silly nickname. He would have to retrain himself.

“Uh,” Sapnap tapped his chin, “Well, I’ve known him the longest. Since like, middle school. I remember when he went to England.” He glanced up at George. “He talked about you.”

How the fuck was he supposed to take that.

“What did he say?” George asked. Sapnap rolled his eyes, replaying the memories in his mind.

“Shouldn’t say,” He grinned. *Oh. Right.*

The conversation fell flat after that.

-

The idea popped into his head of mentioning to John how he wasn’t seeing Dream as often as he thought he would- tell him that he was right, but quickly remembered where they had left off and how that wouldn’t be that good of an idea.

Later that day, they received an email about the release party of *Faceless*. George couldn’t help but wonder why they couldn’t hear it yet. Maybe if he argued with her, he could see D- Clay again, tell him exactly every new flaw he had came up with the night before.

He had gotten so used to not seeing Clay that it came as a surprise when he turned up to the studio, to check in with the band. That day he had on smudged eyeliner, and a black jacket that George had seen hung up in his house. He barely got three steps in before George exclaimed, obnoxiously, “wow, decided to finally show up?”

Clay smirked, “miss me already? We talked, like twice. I thought you’d be less clingy than that.”

“I’m just saying that you should help your band prepare,” George said, gesturing at his friends that looked like deers caught in the headlights.

“Oh, do you think they’d be on your side then?” Clay stared, “You’ve known them for three days. I’ve known Sappap sin-”

“Intermediate, he told me,” George smirked.

“ ‘*Intermediate*’, ” Clay mocked, “you’re so British, it makes me want to throw up.”

“OK, Okay, boys, settle down,” Karl said, moving to stand in between them, holding up his hands.

“Sorry,” they both mumbled, resembling of an age much younger than what they were. George crossed his arms, moving back to his band, his defenders. They all looked exactly as they did when they met him three days ago- starstruck.

“What made you come early, big D?” Alex asked. *Oh, George was definitely using that.*

“Am I not aloud to check in on my incredible bands?” Clay grinned.

“We’re no-” George started, but Clay interrupted.

“-Not your band, I know!” He laughed. “God, Georgie, you’re so predictable. I wanted to talk to the rest of your band, actually.”

Georgie. The nickname ran in his ears- it had only been used in situations much more intimate than this.

Clay pushed past him, nudging him with his elbow, to get to ‘*the rest of his band*’, who all looked bloody terrified.

“Don’t *nudge me*-”

Clay nudged him again, harder. Or at least intended to, but with his extra strength he completely pushed George onto his arse. If the person who pushed him wasn’t Clay, it would’ve been maybe attractive the way he could throw him around easily.

“ *Ow!*” George whined, staring up at him.

He grinned, “oops.”

He was going to hit him one of these days. Hit him right in his stupid, punchable face. George hated how he could tell that this was Clay in a good mood. The way he bounced in his step, grinned instead of smirked.

“So, you guys got an email about my album release party, right?” Clay announced. *The Discs* nodded, terrified. George fantasised about hitting him in the shins- he could easily from this angle. He continued, “An I’m guessing you’ve never been to one before, right? Well, you guys are going to need formal clothing, it’s that kind of event. I can buy you some, if you want.” He glanced down at George while he said that. George glared at him.

“ *Buy me clothes?* ” George repeated.

“I didn’t say *you*,” Clay repeated, “but if you want, I can. You need it.”

George let out a scoff as the insult hit. Clay turned back to the band, annoyingly. “Do any of you other than George want-”

George got up to his feet, “I don’t want yo-”

“Well do you want my money for you to buy yourself clothes?” Clay mumbled, voice full of annoyance.

“No, I don’t want y-”

“Yes,” Wilbur cut in, “*we’d* appreciate that. Thank you so much.”

Clay smiled at him, “Great!” he pulled out his wallet, looking through and placing down six fifties against Nikki’s drumset. “Is that good?”

“Are you shitting me?” Wilbur asked, laughing, “that’s..”

“I’ll give you some more,” Clay shrugged, saying it as though he was selfless. He placed an unbelievable amount down onto the green stack, drum set banging lightly with the motion. He glanced down at Nikki, “If you want more, I can always get you it,” He grinned at Wilbur, tuft of hair falling over his eyes. “It’s not a problem.”

“Thank you so much, man,” Wilbur said breathlessly, “seriously, like-”

“Really, it’s fine,” Clay grinned, laugh evident in his voice- obviously proud of himself. He turned back to his own band, to help them with something unimportant.

George hated it. He hated it, he hated how Clay had acted as though they were some fucking charity for him to donate to.

Tommy and Wilbur fought over the money, like brothers do, and all that George could do was stand, dumbfounded, at just how much he had hated every second of that.

The shopping trip was full of family-like bickering and shock at just how much money Dream was willing to throw at them. And it showed that they fell for it. They let Clay buy their love.

It was horrific.

George grabbed a suit. Classic, black and white. The old woman behind the counter said he would look beautiful in it, asking him if he was going to get married, which made him laugh.

“I’m 24,” he said, “a bit young for that.”

Wilbur chose out something slightly funkier- a long coat and a patterned dress shirt, tucked into black pants. He even bought a formal hat for it. Tommy ended up getting a blue suit, with a bright red tie, and Nikki got a red dress that sank down to her mid-thigh, bedazzled with a lighter, pink colour (not like George could see it). They were surprised to see that they used up all of the money Dream had given them- that that’s how much you need to buy a good outfit.

-

Another thing that came as a hit in the face was the interview that Caroline had planned for them. Because they were musicians. Who did interviews. Right.

She had also panicked about their ‘*lack of media training*’ - the stupidest concept possible. They had declined all of those offers, they don’t need training in being nice people.

They were pretty sure they didn’t?

It wasn’t a particularly big interviewing company, but none the less incredibly nerve-racking. And the interviewers made a point of asking every question possible that wasn’t about their music.

“Today I’m here with *The Discs*- an up and coming indie rock band all the way from London, England,” the interviewer spoke, some man in his early thirties. The camera buzzed. “Now tell me, what made you come up with such an original name?”

Wilbur decided to speak, “Well, it was mainly me and Tommy. We used to like- have these discs that our parents would play for me when I was really little, I dunno about him,” he gestured at his brother, “but like, to me they were a symbol of childhood, and youthfulness, and that kind of solidified when him and one of his friends started to have these play fights over them-” Tommy began protesting for Wilbur not to tell them that because *it’s embarrassing*, but Wilbur continued, “Anyway. That kind of inspired me. And it just- it sounds like a band name, that was mainly it- I’m kind of making up meaning behind it.”

The interviewer nodded. “Great answer, now- George, is it?”

George blinked, like a deer caught in the headlights- not having expected to have been picked out individually. He had hoped that he could just stay silent. He turned to him, “Uh, yes?”

“You in particular have peaked quite an interest in looks alone, my friend,” he grinned, and George flushed, looking down at the ground. “Tell me, can you confirm or deny that you have a little lady at home that can see these incredible looks whenever she wants too.”

Oh no.

George chuckled nervously, scratching his jaw, “Uh. Well, I, uh.”

The camera buzzed. The interviewer looked at him expectedly. Words tried but failed to form.

He could tell him that he did have a *boyfriend*, and therefore reinforce the label on camera. Make it be remembered. Or, he could say no- and have John yell at him over the phone. He didn’t know what to say.

Nikki cut in, “it’s complicated, you would say, right George? Sorry, could you cut that one out?”

George sighed with relief, leaning down in his seat and nodding with gratitude.

“Oh, yeah, sure!” he flicked through his cue cards nervous fully. He was nervous. The thought was slightly comforting. He landed on one, “Ah, Wilbur. You and Tommy are brothers, correct? Tell me how hard it must be having a little brother in your band.”

Wilbur grinned, “Well, sir. Let me tell you,” he paused for dramatic effect. He was made for this. “It’s *horrible*.”

They flicked through a multitude of questions, before the focus landed on a topic George was willing to speak on.

“Now, we may as well address the elephant in the room,” he said. “You all are going to be touring with the Grammy winner - Dream! How has working with him been?”

George spoke up, “Uh, it’s,” a small grin rose on his lips as Nikki cut him off.

“-Sir, he should be the last person you let talk about Dream,” she said, smirking, and George leaned down further in his seat and rested his head in his hands.

“Really?” he asked, missing the lighthearted tone, “because, he seemed to point you out in particular about how he knew you? Feel free to expand on this.”

George chuckled nervously, grin creeping up from behind his hand and looking up, “ah. Uh, we went to high school together.”

“Oh, *wow* !” the interviewer exclaimed, clearly ecstatic about just how much of a title that would be. “So, were you two.. Friends..? Or..?”

Or. George scoffed.

“We didn’t know each other that well,” he said. “He was only there for a year- he moved because his family was doing work there. Rich people, you know. He was a year below me.”

“You’re *older* than him?” The way he made it sound so surprising was humorous.

“Yeah,” he smiled, before turning it into a slight pout. “He didn’t like me that much.”

“Well- what’s not to like?” the interviewer searched for the right words, face going blank when he realised how that would have sounded.

“*Stop*,” he said, hands creeping back up to cover his face, trying to hide flustered laughter.

“Now, your song blew up on the teenage phenomenon, Tiktok,” the interviewer said, clearly wanting to change the subject after just flirting with one of the band members, “Tell me, do what is your favourite Tiktok dance?”

George watched as Tommy went up to embarrass himself, giggling lightly. He shot a glance at Wilbur, who grinned at him back. It was finally happening.

Chapter End Notes

kudos/comments are very appreciated!! i cant wait to share the next chapter with you
AAHH xx

Stare At The Rockstar Who Stared At The Stars

Chapter Notes

i really hope i did this chapter justice, i really hope it turns out ok as i envisioned. a trigger for this chapter is very heavily implied drug use- if that has the potential to trigger you, you don't have to read this at all, don't force yourself to. if you're fine with that, enjoy!! <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It became clearer and clearer of the tension about Dream's album release. Teasers of singles dropped, though nothing worked quite as much as the instagram post that was released.

The theme was grunge-based, clearly trying to imitate something resemblant of the late nineties with the cheap looking camera, and big, bold black writing against white background. It said- all capitalized, "*FACELESS*", with "*DREAM!*" in a smaller bold just underneath. But the thing that caught George's, and the internet's eye was how fucking good he looked. Blonde hair, shaggy over lined black eyes. Black choker, layered silver jewelry. Fucking abs visible beneath a mesh, fishnet pattern that clung to his skin, daring. A tight, black tanktop with some pink design on it was pared overtop, cropped with a rip. His incredibly oversized blue jeans hung dangerously low- in one of the slides he leant backwards, so that you could see dark hairs that clung to his prominent v-line. They were barely held to his hips with a thin, black belt. Tall platform boots.

It- more or less, broke the internet.

And George hated how he could see why. He hated how he saw the tease to his eyes, the slight smirk and all-knowingness about his pose. The carelessness of it. How *big* he looked. The grunge to it, how cleanly the cameraman had constructed the raggedness of it. The photo was full of smoke that cascaded down into George's lungs. Because that was what Dream was- a cloud of smoke. Unwanted- in theory, undesirable, but nonetheless addicting. George tried so hard to push it out of his brain. Because it was stupid.

His eyes flew to the wall- a black rotary phone hung against the wall in the kitchen. He called John almost immediately after it was released. To distract himself. To remind him that he was strong. Only then did he realise how he hadn't called John, really. Not long enough for a proper conversation.

"Hello?" The voice on the other end was unfamiliar, tone filtered with the gentle buzz of the receiver. The realisation hit him only when he spoke- George had forgotten the sound of his voice.

He wanted to cry.

"Uh.." John cleared his throat, "Who is this? It's John speaking- from Southborough Highschool?"

George spoke up. "John?"

He called out to him. Please, please.

The two second silence could've killed him.

“...George?” John said, after a pause.

“Look, I-”

“Why the *fuck* haven’t you been answering any of my calls?” John exclaimed, unexpected- voice full of an anger that George didn’t think he was strong enough to show.

“I..” words failed to form, throat tightening.

“God, I’ve wanted to talk to you all fucking-” John cut himself off, fuming. He sounded angry. So angry. “Go fuck Dream or something. I don’t want to talk to you.”

His voice cut out, the noise emitting from the receiver becoming a gentle *beep*. Taunting. Mocking.

George began to cry. He didn’t know if it was the image of Clay, holding him down, pulling on hair that he had requested to be made perfect that made the lump rise in the centre of his voicebox, or just how much he’d fucked up with John. He’d messed up *so badly*. So fucking bad. He didn’t even want to think about it- let his mistakes process in his mind. But it was that or falling again. Letting himself fail, like a fool, before the fucking tour had even started.

George placed the receiver back into its holder in the wall. He felt sick. He needed a distraction- something. Wilbur’s warm hugs. The soft purr of a cat. Performing, feeling the music run through your veins with the high of a drug.

Caroline paced around the room, clearly stressed. “Look, guys- we still need to perfect this one part of this song, and the albums coming out in three days,” she turned to them. “I won’t be able to help you that much. I’m sorry- my schedule is just so fucked right now.”

She sat down on the seat, taking another sip of her coffee.

Wilbur cleared his throat. “Well, that’s fi-”

She stood up again, snapping her fingers, “God, that’s it! You guys need to review the font on-” she cut herself off, rubbing her eyes tiredly. “I’ll send you the link. It’s like- going to be everywhere. Also, you guys have basically no photos. Articles are going to be written about you- they need references.”

“We have, uh-”

“I know, but those are album covers,” she said. “Look- this is a part of being a professional band. Photoshoots, interviews, paperworks, you signed up for this shit.”

Wilbur’s jaw twitched. “Yes, ma’am.”

“OK, so, I ordered you guys a photoshoot from the same photographer as Dream’s,” she said. “I’ll send you the deets and whatnot. Also-” she pulled a disposable, polaroid camera out of her bag. “Take this. Use them to do whatever, it’s just a good idea with the party coming up and everything.”

“Thank you,” Nikki said.

“Also,” Caroline turned to Tommy. “You’re a minor, correct?”

He nodded cautiously.

“You can’t come to the release party,” she smiled. “OK, I think that’s it.”

Tommy’s jaw hung open, clearly trying to hold back some curses. George thought back to the hundred or so dollars he spent on his suit sympathetically.

The photoshoot was, surprisingly- OK. The outfits they had were a similar theme, Nikki’s the most extreme with arm warmers and an oversized fur hat. As for George’s, he also had to wear a hat-woolen and white, stitches circling overtop of each other. His outfit was oversized in the way to make his thighs look delicate, small. Layers and layers of pearls fell overtop of it.

“The camera loves you!” someone who was taking the photo said. It made George flush slightly, light smile growing.

As they walked back someone asked him if he’d ever considered being a full-time model. George scoffed. “Uh.”

“He’s the pretty one in the group,” Nikki cut in.

“Yeah, people see his face first and then the music,” Wilbur laughed, hitting him playfully, “they see his face and that hypnotises them into listening.”

They pushed each other along, getting changed back into their clothing. Only once he had changed back, and was in the taxi back to their hotel did George realise how he got through that. How he did good. He must’ve looked good as well, from just how many people commented on his appearance.

He wished that he asked them about Clay’s- just something about what he was thinking when his was taken. Their’s wasn’t so sexual- did he request specifically for such a sensual outfit? Pose?

They arrived back at the hotel, kicking off their shoes and going into their separate rooms. George and Tommy were bickering about exactly *how* you play pictionary, when three sharp knocks rang from across the room. Tommy went into Wilbur’s, mumbling something about not wanting to talk to people.

George went to open it, socks nearly slipping across the wooden floor. He was awaited with probably the person he was least expecting to see- Dream.

Of fucking course. Right now. Clay.

And he looked, objectively, nice. Blonde hair thrown over green eyes that were lined with darkness and glitter. A white undershirt was visible underneath a cross patterned dress shirt, collar flared. He had single chain falling around his neck, and a heavy, vintage black velvet blazer rolled up to his elbows, and black dress pants with safety pins along some of the hem. The belt he wore was studded with silver. In his hand, which was decorated with rings and chapped painted nails- he held multiple tote bags full of what seemed to be clothing.

“I- uh,” he said, looking down at George. “I thought-”

George blinked at him. “What are you doing in my house?”

“It’s not *you*-”

“Shouldn’t you be working on your album?” He asked, tone surprisingly domestic. Lined with

care. He prayed that Clay had missed it.

“Well, I thought that you wanted me to buy you clothes?” he pushed past George, wandering into their bedroom. It felt strangely intimate- having him in the room he had grown accompanied to over the past few days. Having him, all glammed up, see his clothing spilled across the floor messily, or the half drunk coffee cups laid on his bedside table. George stared at him.

“I thought you gave us the money?” he mumbled, hands curling into small fists at his sides.

Clay laughed, “that was for the rest of your band- I uh. I’ve been trying to find clothes for ages, but-”

“That means this is a waste then,” George pouted at the black and white suit he had hung up- the only thing he had made sure not to dent with folds.

Clay grinned, “Hey- no biggie. You can return it, or keep it some other time,” He sat down on George’s bed. The room fell into silence.

It felt weird. Too nice a place to bicker.

“So, uh, there’s another thing,” Clay looked up at George, who nodded. “I, um. My family is going to be there. Not at *there*, but at my house.”

“Great, a bunch of rich brats?” George rolled his eyes, “can’t wait to meet them.”

Clay looked hurt, “hey,” he said, tone soft. Guilt roamed in George’s guts at his stupid puppy eyes. Clay stood up, wandering over to get closer to him. Hands hovered over George’s shoulders, then back to his sides. He continued, “that. I- I don’t want you to be rude to me around my family. It’s just like- this is something important to me. You know?”

George didn’t know exactly why, but he nodded.

Clay continued. “I, uh. Tommy shouldn’t be there. At the party. So you could drop him off at my house? Like a mini party for minors. And my mom.”

George scoffed. From here he could see the thin layer of colouring plastered to Dream’s skin, covering his freckles.

“You’re wearing makeup,” he mumbled, refusing to let their eyes meet.

“Always do,” Clay said, grin flickering on his cheeks.

“No, it’s like-” George fumbled for the right words, small hands running up to caress the layer that toned his skin. A tanner colour rubbed off onto his fingertip.

“-Foundation,” Clay grinned, finishing for him. “I didn’t think you to be one to judge someone for breaking gender roles.”

“I can’t see your freckles,” George murmured, letting their eyes meet. He could see the way his eyelashes had been thickened. He wanted to touch that as well.

“Do you want to?”

Do you want to?

The question was much deeper than what was at the surface. George wasn’t sure if Clay took it

that way as well, intended it. George murmured, “maybe.”

Clay inhaled sharply, stepping back. Pulling back. George should’ve been the one to do that. Why didn’t he pull back first?

“I need to go,” he said, clearly nervous, “uh, hope you like your clothes. I hope you don’t think the album’s too shit.”

George scoffed, moving his arms up to cross over his chest. “Can’t make any promises.”

“Oh yeah- how did the photoshoot go?” Dream asked.

“Uh, it-” George began. “Wait. How do you know about that?”

Clay blinked, eyes widening. “Oh. I- uh. I just. I- Caroline told me.”

George grinned, rolling his eyes. “Sure. Bye, Clay.”

“Don’t call me that!” he called, already halfway out of his door.

George stared as he disappeared out of the door, to go to the party. Tommy said something from the living room.

What the fuck was that?

Why was he so..

George searched his brain for exactly why he had laid a finger across his cheek, why he had.. What? Why did he *do that* ? George’s eyes flew back to the bag Clay had laid on his bed. He wandered over to it, seeing beige, black, and white fabric.

He pulled out a white turtleneck, folded softly, and with that a black dress shirt. With that there was high-waisted khakis, with a brown belt. Out of the folds fell a gold necklace, and a folded, white piece of paper. George unwrapped it, and was greeted with messy handwriting and an uneven drawing.

Since I know that you have no sense of style at all, this is basically how you would wear this correctly. ~~I hope yo~~

George scoffed at the tiny diagram of a skinny boy with the clothes styled ‘correctly’. Apparently ‘correctly’ meant half buttoning up the black dress shirt, layering it overtop of the turtleneck and tucking them both into the pants. A tiny arrow pointed to the doodle of him with the label ‘bitch’. George chucked it back on the bed carelessly, calling out to Tommy that he would be there in a second.

“Wait- so, that was Dream?” Tommy said, walking into the bedroom. George looked back at the ghosts of them minutes earlier, it barely having hit just how close they had been.

“Yeah,” he said softly, turning the folded fabric over in his palms. It ruffled softly.

“He *bought you clothes?*” Tommy exclaimed loudly. George giggled.

“Yeah,” he said, “also- you’re not coming to the party. You have a play date with his mum.”

“*What.*”

The night of the party crept up on them until there they sat, in a taxi that drove across, toward Clay's house, full of family-like bickering.

He and the rest of the band had agreed that they would arrive exactly on time, Wilbur being too scared of hurting the good reputation he had with Dream. Probably just in the hopes he would get more money. George had changed into the clothes, surprised at how actually okay it looked. He was scared it was going to sag strangely- that it would look bad. He looked cute.

Wilbur protested when George said that Tommy was staying at Clay's- “ *What?* He's basically eighteen. Let him have fun! Why is this the *one* time you listen to Dream?”

“I agree with Wilbur,” Tommy cut in. George shushed them both.

“Trust me, you wouldn't if you went there,” George rolled his eyes.

“But I want to to hard drugs!” Tommy yelled. The taxi driver eyed them through the rearview mirror.

“That's- that's a joke,” Wilbur confirmed. The car pulled up and around Clay's long driveway. George stared out the window.

He opened the door instantly, heading out. “I'm taking you in.”

“Ooh, wanna have another private visit w-” Nikki was cut off when George slammed the door on her face, grabbing Tommy by the elbow and wandering into the home. It looked different in the evening, the peach and gold blanket of colour dripping against Clay's roof, mixing with the gray shadows of the hedges and trees. The air was cold, George's hands grew chilly. He knocked on the door three times.

The woman who answered the door showed a striking resemblance to Clay, with her sharp jawline, soft hair and freckles. She wore a white dress, a slightly more conservitave look than Clay- who would wander around town in a mesh fishnet shirt like it was nothing. A sister, possibly. It hit George that he didn't actually know if Clay had siblings. She held a cup of red liquid- probably wine, in her right hand loosely.

“Uh, hi,” he started.

“Hi,” she said, words slightly slurred. George could hear muffled conversations from inside. “Wait- are you Tommy?”

She pointed at George. He hated being short.

“Aha, no, this is-” he pulled Tommy forwards. “This is Tommy. I'm a Tiktok trend.”

She laughed modestly into her cup of wine. “Okay, sure. Tommy, you can go inside. Take your shoes off. You can watch Netflix if you want.”

Tommy's eyes lit up, quickly rushing inside. George stared at her awkwardly.

“Uh, sorry-” he said. “Is Clay there?”

She blinked. “Clay? Are you like- his boyfriend?”

Boyfriend? Clay would have a-

“No, he's not here,” she laughed, words slurred slightly. “He's at the party, obviously. Bye-e...”

She closed the door, waving pedicured fingers in his face lightly.

George stood on the porch, in the cold, and glanced back at the taxi. So much for meeting his family.

The entire ride back to the actual party, all he could think of was what she had said. “*Are you like his boyfriend?*” What did that *mean*. Was it mocking? Did Clay secretly have a boyfriend? Was Clay into guys so a ‘boyfriend’ wouldn’t be out of the blue?

For some reason, George didn’t want him to like men. Because that would give him an explanation to how horrible he was- another reason for George to forgive him. Because it would humanise his actions, make him be the one to sympathise with. George hated it, hated the idea of it.

The car pulled into the driveway, and they were greeted with the view of a stereotypical long line of people, and a doorman letting them in. They all started pointing as soon as they saw the taxi.

Nikki payed the taximan quickly, rubbing George’s back softly. They got out, and everyone started screaming.

“It’s that guy from the Tiktok!”

“I love your song- it’s so-”

“Can one of you please give me Dream’s number?!”

The bodyguard walked over to them, holding his arm out defensively and guiding them over. George smiled nervously at the loudness of it. He wished he was with Tommy.

They told the doorman their names, and were let in, the line continuing to scream obnoxiously. Even Wilbur seemed overwhelmed. Wandering in, Dream’s songs blasted loudly, too loud. George wanted to go home. He didn’t want to be there.

The bodyguard let them into the VIP room, murmuring something about how that’s where Dream is.

Opening the door, it already seemed slightly calmer, the loud banging of the music becoming slightly more muffled. The bodyguard patted them on the back, pushing them in.

Wilbur’s eyes lit up when he saw the bar, patting George on the shoulder. “Hey, mate, me and Nikki are going to-”

“Great, go ahead,” George mumbled, being left behind. Staring at the abyss of people playing poker, sitting at tables and laughing. He was just about to grab his phone- the only thing being some sort of escape when he heard Sapnap’s voice, turning to it.

“Yo, yo, my *man!*” Sapnap yelled over the blasting music. “Yo, this guy. Oh my god.”

George pointed a finger at himself to see if he was the one being spoken too, but Clay quickly answered that question for him.

“Georgie!” he exclaimed, running towards him, drunkenly giggling. “You *came!*”

He wore basically the same outfit as George had seen him in the day of the photoshoot, though his blazer had been stripped and his eyes looked far wilder. He looked good. He always did- George remembered. George’s eyes flickered down to his freckles. He wasn’t wearing foundation.

“Came, heh,” Sapnap laughed, which made Clay fall to the ground, smacking the floor as obnoxious laughter drew otop of the music.

“Hi,” George managed, waving a hand shyly. Clay grinned at him, getting up to his feet tipsily.

“Georgie, Georgie!” he giggled, grabbing George’s hand and eloping their fingers. Holding his hand. He pulled him across the room, “Sit with me, sit with us!”

George was sat down in a table of people- women dressed extravagantly, blushing on their partners lap. He saw Alex and Karl giggling to each other.

“What do you w-”

“Everyone shut up!” Clay exclaimed otop of the chatter at the table. “This is George. By the end of the night I want at least one of you bitches to fuck him- he came all the way from England. OK? He fucking deserves it.”

They all *oohed* in delight, some of the men’s attention perking up.

George went red, small palms curling into fists. *What the fuck?*

“No- Clay, I- I have a boyfriend,” he corrected, glaring at Clay. The men at the table booed disapprovingly- obnoxiously, which made Clay elbow George playfully. George pulled him out into the bathrooms, barely aware of how their hands were still intertwined. George pushed him into a stall, slammed the door behind them, and whispered. “Are you high?”

Clay rolled his eyes at him, “Does it matter? My fucking albums about to come out! I’m living the *dream*, it’s in my name!”

George blinked at him. “So you are high. Jesus Christ. Are you fucking out of your mind? I have a fucking boyfriend- you can’t just say that to those people. You were so *nice* to me, I thought- I thought that you were going to be at your house. But of course not, you’re killing your fucking body and, and, and-” George leant backwards, rubbing his forehead. He stared at Clay. “Well? Are you going to fucking say anything?”

“I was right,” he whispered softly.

“ *What?* ”

“You look pretty in the clothes I chose for you,” he said. “I- I was right. I predicted it. I’m basically physic.”

George glared at him. “You’re annoying- that’s what you are. You can’t just-”

Clay grabbed his hand, holding it up. George froze in his grip.

“Tell me about your boyfriend,” he said, “Tell me. Please.”

“ *Wh-* ”

“*Please.*” he pressed, voice quivering. “I just- I need *something* . Have you talked to him recently?”

George’s mind flew back to being yelled at, being left with the ring of the phone chord. Holding it to his ear and crying.

“No,” he whispered back. “Why- why do you want to know?”

“Is he- is he good?” Clay asked, “I need to know.”

“He’s good to me,” George said, without thinking about exactly whether that was true or not. Clay smirked.

“Is he real?” Clay said, slight grin hooking up. He leant uncomfortably close, mouth ghosting over George’s ear. He whispered, “Did you make him up to make me jealous? You fucking bitch. I know what you did.”

Big hands clutched the back of his shirt, holding onto him. George fell against the stall door, and Clay fell into his shirt. Holding him. Hugging him.

George pushed him off. Dream staggered back, looking surprised. *Surprised*- fuck you. “What the fuck? Did I make up my- no? Not everything is about you, you fucking weirdo. Why would I want you to be-” he stared at him. “Do you think I still *like you*? So I would try and make- Look. Me and John are surely not perfect, but, fuck, I’d choose him over you in a second.”

Clay grabbed George’s wrists, tugging him closer. George tried to squirm away, but he pressed, “Why are you *here then* .”

“For Wilbur- not everything is about you!” he yelled, pushing Clay so hard that he fell against the toilet seat. He looked up at him with his stupid puppy green eyes. George panted slightly. “Sorry.”

Clay didn’t respond.

“I’m sorry, Clay.”

“Don’t call me that,” he murmured, “I- you don’t know me. You don’t get to call me that.”

“I do *fucking*-”

“You don’t,” he said, voice firm. “You don’t know me. Don’t call me that. Really.”

“ *Clay*. ” George taunted, experimentally. It was Dream’s turn to push him. A strand of hair fell over George’s eyes.

“Don’t fucking-” Dream sighed. “I could beat you up. You know that, right? I could beat you up, and fire you, and leave you back with *John* and let him do whatever the fuck he wants to do with you. I could do it- you fucking know it. Because you’re *tiny*- I could hit you once and you’d pass out. But I’m a good person. But- sometimes, seeing your stupid fucking face, I just might.” He panted. A strand of hair fell over his eyes. “Get out of my way.”

“Ok, *Clay!*” George yelled, every stupid threat flying completely over his head. Clay pushed his way out of the stall, George following him, continuing to taunt him. “Bye, *Clay!* I would hate to think that we were getting closer and you just ruined it! I actually thought I could stand you for awhile there, but thanks for reminding me- really, Clay. I really needed it.”

Dream slammed the door closed. George stared at the silhouette that used to be his.

George blinked as it hit him.

Why did that feel so bad. Why did that feel serious. Fighting with Dream was fun- why did that feel real. Why did he feel bad. That wasn’t fun.

He sighed, leaning against the wall. If he were bigger, stronger, more of a man- he would punch it. Leave a mark. Let out his anger. George raised his fist. Realistically, he would probably just break his knuckles pathetically. He let it fall to his side, and he cried. Rest his head against the wall, and let himself cry. He shakily grabbed his phone, the time flashing *11:31pm*. In under thirty minutes, Clay's new album would be released. And they would have to go on tour- because this is George's life. Why the fuck did he do that. He ruins his relationship with everybody- even if they're already broken. He ruins them- ruins them beyond what he thought was possible.

He cried there, let the tears seep down his cheeks and onto the clothes Clay had bought for him. Did he feel guilty as well? He kept on looking up at the door, hoping, that he would enter. To apologise. To just fucking speak to him- because yelling was worse than silence. Because at least then, you're not alone.

He must've sat there for an entire thirty minutes, ugly crying on the floor, waiting for him to come back, because he heard a loud countdown being yelled, and the music stopped.

"Five!"

George got up to his feet shakily.

"Four!"

He glanced in the mirror, seeing his red eyes stained with water. He wiped them.

"Three!"

He pressed his fingers against his inner palm.

"Two!"

Start already. Just start. He leaned backwards against the wall.

"One!"

He squeezed his eyes shut. All he could hear were the loud screams from the room outside.

But the worst part of it was- the part George hated the most, was how the music was good. How it sounded good- better than *The Discs*. Sure, it was laced with pop, production far more expensive than Wilbur could dream of- but it was *good*. It crept up into George's lungs, thickening. He couldn't breathe, and the music sifted through him, calming him. He recognized the harsh guitar of Alex, and keened at how raw his voice sounded. Real.

The first song came to an end, fading out with a line that was cryptic and dark, and George hated it. Because now Clay was better than him in every way- in music. In looks. In money. And it hurt George, hurt him because the lyrics weren't made for him- it reminded George that there were other parts to his life. Other than George.

Five songs or so in- only one teetering on *alright* rather than just plain good, it became stripped down, all that was heard was an acoustic guitar, the light tapping of a drumset, and Clay's voice.

You slipped right back into my life

Did you mean to make me stumble?

Forgiveness isn't something you expect of me.

George's eyes lolled back into his head, pressing his knees to his chest. This couldn't be about him. Get him out of your mind.

I don't know what you want

I don't know if I know what I do either

Hatred isn't something I'm used to facing

Overlays of his voice seeped through, creating soft harmonies.

Do you know how hard it was for me to forget your pretty face?

I'm horrified with the reality that we'll be stuck in the same place, again

And you are acting exactly the same way

You did in my nightmares

How am I going to bare it?

George tried to pretend he didn't recognise the direct connection. 'We'll be stuck in the same place, again' felt so personal to George. George felt like he had overstepped, read in his diary. Like this was something he wasn't supposed to know about.

Does he treat you how I could

I hope he's at the least good

Are you good to him?

Would you be good to me?

So far you haven't been but that's completely my fault, oh

It fell back into the chorus, more instruments kicking in. It turned into the bridge- tempo changing.

You're all I think about but you're so easy to shatter

I've shattered you before

Does he shatter you- does he leave you sore?

Did he, did he, did he, oh

You could hear his voice throb tiredly. It faded out, and everyone from across the room clapped. Someone yelled, 'next Grammy!'

George felt like he was going to be sick. His phone vibrated in his pocket. Someone wandered in, glancing at him on the floor.

"Hey, man, are you-"

George stared up. Alex.

"George?" he asked, "you alright?"

"I- uh," he rubbed his eyes. "I dunno."

He genuinely didn't know how Alex was going to react. Slightly awkwardly, he leant down, rubbing his shoulder softly.

"Hey," he said, "you're aloud to go home. You don't have to be here."

George nodded slightly, getting up. Not wanting to go in depth about it, because Lord knows he would choose the millionaire over him.

"Hey, you're really red," he grinned, "Lets go."

"Where?" George scoffed, staring at his feet.

"Out-" he said, "There's an ice cream place just down the street. Gelato. It's open until 3am, and right now it's only-" he pulled out his phone. "One thirty. Do you wanna go?"

George stared at him. Blinked. Smiled. "Okay."

"Okay!" Alex smiled, grabbing George by the arm and tugging him out, out into the VIP room, and there, out into the street. "Get on my back!" he yelled.

"What?" George laughed, voice echoing across the street.

"Get on my back right now!" Alex yelled, and when George did, they tried but failed to do a piggyback. "Oh my god you fucking dumbass!" He yelled lightheartedly, and George laughed as well, falling down.

Alex was right- the ice cream was really good. George chose vanilla, and he sat outside, wind bussing loudly. George sat, and stared at the sky. Somewhere, deep down, he wondered if John was staring too.

"Wait holy shit," Alex giggled, poking George and pointing at the figure down the street. "Is that Dream?"

And there he was. Stood, looking up at the stars. Alex murmured something about going over to talk to him, jaywalking across the road and running to him. George blinked. He wanted to call to him. To apologise. To make him apologise.

But he didn't. Continued to stare- watching him laugh with Alex. Stare at the stars, see the way the moon reflected on his hair. And suddenly, some boy in England felt so unimportant. Stare at the rockstar who stared at the stars.

Chapter End Notes

SO MUCH HAPPENED I HOPE THAT SEEMED ORGANIZED adsjkfa;d ok on the note of how this chapter was constructed- i actually was so unsure of what to make happen during the actual party. like how it would be memorable- i had no idea what to do. and then it hit me that i need some more fule for their burning hatred of eachother, so there it was. as always, comments are incredibly appreciated. thank you for the support <3

Busses and Bonfires

Chapter Notes

hi!!! this chapter has taken awhile to write mainly because i dont actually have a laptop right now, so at first i didn't write at all because i was waiting for it to be fixed, then i wrote half of this chapter on my phone, but it got deleted lmao so i had to rewrite it. thank you for all the support, enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The album was a hit- expectedly so. Though George would never think of admitting it out loud, it surpassed every already high expectation of what it would sound like. Articles and articles, photoshoots and photoshoots were released, all about Dream. Even people who hated his music in the past were admitting to it being a good fucking piece of art.

George had thought up every excuse he could— it being ghostwritten, which was all around very possible, until he remembered Track 6 - Shattered.

George had scanned his brain for every possible way to avoid thinking about that song— but it was all everyone was talking about. What takes away from being close with a famous person, maybe.

The lyrics flashed back in his brain. He didn't want to think about it.

Do you know how hard it was for me to forget your pretty face?

Pretty.

“Pretty privilege can't get you talent, Georgie.”

Clay's voice ran strong in his ears. George was there again, seeing the subtle eyebrow twitch. The small, cocky smirk.

George would hate to think that...

George groaned, moving to cover his face with his hands. And the tone of the song had been so unclear as well, whether it was platonic, or.... Or.

George sighed into his fingers. That was definitely not something he was going to think about.

Nikki had connected the dots. George didn't know if he wanted to, even. They were right there. Fuck, fuck.

George remembered the way Nikki mentioned it, subtly but sternly, something along the lines of, “that one song, it sounded..”

And her knowing meant it could be true. That it was about George, that he—

No. George wasn't going to do that. Let himself spiral over Dream. He doesn't deserve it. George rubbed his forehead. Get yourself together.

It was probably about some blonde girl, someone Clay would actually show an ounce of interest to. Not that George wanted interest to be shown by him—

Right. Not going there.

Their relationship had been stained after the party, they somehow ruined something that George had thought was already horrible. But, before at least it had been fun to ridicule each other, throw around templated insults with no spite. Because now, now George couldn't even tease him about it, he'd get punched.

It was high-school all over again. Minus the crush on Clay, obviously.

George had texted John the morning after the party. To run, an attempt to grasp at what was grounded, safe. A reminder that he could go back.

Or maybe he just missed him, who would know.

Im sorry, he had typed, lowercase black font filling the container of words full of shame. His finger hovered over the blue arrow to send. He added, *i shouldve answered your calls. Work has been making me really busy. I love you <3*

Get him back. Please, please, the reminder that he was loved.

John, pathetically, saw the message immediately, instantly typing. The grey bubble appeared, typing, typing, typing, for what felt like a lifetime. He finally sent a message that was a lot shorter than George expected.

Its ok.

George bit his lip. Fuck— it definitely wasn't OK. He was mad, rightfully so. George started typing, but yet another message sent through.

Idk. Work is hard for me too, but I can still call you whenever you need it, it read. *Not like you ever do* was added underneath. George sighed.

I needed it yesterday :(, he sent. He nearly added *'i needed it today'* but realised that would be too much.

John typed, and deleted. He sent through, *Hey, its ok. im really grumpy bc of work too, haha. take care of yourself, my love <3*

George inhaled sharply. Fuck. That means he wants to stop talking. His skin crawled uncomfortably at the use of ' my love ' , as it did whenever John sent one of his many reminders that George was his.

George had asked Tommy on the topic, reaching for someone uneducated enough to not answer with intelligence and caring.

“Uh,” Tommy cleared his throat, “Because he's so far away? Maybe? Like, you're not used to it? —I'm sorry, I'm not really the right person to ask.”

Exactly why George had asked him.

The tour, as well, had begun creeping closer and closer. It was surprising, though they had been preparing for it for the last few weeks, the news arrived unexpected. George also been surprised to

see that they were going to be on a separate bus, because, obviously, they wouldn't tour with Dream. They were the opening band.

Tommy had complained about "Not being able to experience America", which George wholeheartedly agreed with, but Alex, Karl and Sapnap had assured them that Florida wasn't that great, and if they could '*experience America*' in all of the other states they would be visiting. They also just didn't really have the time to be obnoxious tourists, with just how much work they had to do. In media, being a musician had always been described through such red-tinted glasses, being told it's more of a lifestyle than a job. But that was what it felt like—for now, at least, a good job. Clay sometimes seemed as though he treated it as a lifestyle, though, he had been working incredibly hard. Well, '*working*' meant letting people photograph you, and asking you questions centred around yourself, but George had done both of those once and was left exhausted both times.

It was actually happening. He was about to go on tour.

George was packing the final things he had forgotten from the night earlier, making the bed and tidying the hotel even though it wasn't needed, the day that they would leave to go on the bus when Nikki and him got caught up in a conversation. The sun had just started seeping through the blinds, making George more and more aware of what an ungodly hour it was.

"I was just thinking—" Nikki started, "isn't this like, so crazy? We're going on tour."

George turned to her. "Well. Yeah."

She scoffed, "You know what I mean, though. We're going on the bus. We can't back out now, soon we'll be up there, performing in front of thousands."

Nervousness swirled in George's guts at the thought, it having been something he had panicked over, late at night. "God, don't remind me. I'm so scared. Actually."

"Yeah, and what are you going to do about your motion sickness?" she asked.

"I've done basically everything I can," George said, "with the pills and everything. But, it's basically inevitable."

Nikki giggled, "You make it sound so dark."

"Well, if it was you who threw their guts up every time they got on a vehicle for over an hour you'd make it sound dark too!" George exclaimed, laughing.

That morning went incredibly slowly. They went to a restaurant for breakfast, and then to where the busses waited for them.

Getting on the bus didn't feel real. It had been so highly anticipated that being really there, having it happen, hadn't really hit him yet. It never really had, the whole minor fame thing.

Their bus was nice, undoubtedly so. Cramped, yes, but in a modern way. George had expected an actual, shitty bus, not a slick sofa, workable TV, and kitchen lined with LEDs. It was fucking good, Wilbur geeked out about it, and Tommy seemed pretty excited as well. Their roadies—something George hadn't ever considered, packed in their bags and bags for them.

For beds, Wilbur got the biggest, since he was tall, and more or less the 'head of the band'. The entire room was only a bed, Wilbur only being able to sit up and crawl out. Nikki's was similar, except a single bed instead of double. Tommy and George were left with the two single beds in the hall, stacked on top of each other. They only had a curtain between the hallway and the bed.

George glared at Wilbur as he got into the bottom bunk begrudgingly.

He lay there for awhile, connecting to the bus's wifi, scrolling through Twitter. At one point, Wilbur left to go and get water and laughed heartedly when he caught a glimpse of him through the curtain.

"I feel so bad, you look really sad there, pal," he laughed. "And with your whole motion sickness thing, God."

George opened his eyes to stare at him. "Eh. It's kinda comfortable, actually. I'm just scared of hitting my head when I get out."

Wilbur inhaled sharply, a clear '*oh, that would hurt*'. "Ouch."

George paused. "You could give me your be—"

"No." Wilbur laughed. "Talk about hitting your head, I'm 6'5, for god's sake."

George rolled his eyes. "Barely," he murmured.

Wilbur crouched down to meet George's eyes, awkwardly still holding his water. "Can you believe this?" He said fondly. "This is it— we're here. It's happening. We're on tour, George."

George scrunched up his nose, squirming slightly, "Yeah, with Dream."

Wilbur rolled his eyes. "Oh yeah— he has, like, a bonfire thing tonight. It's like their tradition before a first performance."

George scoffed, "Yeah. I remember what happened last time I went to something he'd planned. Sounds great."

"Oh come on, it can't have been that bad," Wilbur said. Oh, how wrong he was.

"Will." George pressed, "he threatened to beat me up."

Wilbur paused.

"OK, so maybe it was kinda ba—"

"I don't want to go, Will," George yawned, delicate fingers reaching up to pull the curtain closed. "I just wanna... Sleep..."

"Well, what about celebrating our journey as musici—" Wilbur's face fell lightheartedly as the curtain was closed on his face, "wow. I see how it is."

George awoke, on his stomach, to the soft murmurs and creeks from outside the white blanket that was held between his bed and whatever was behind it. He awoke with the unsurety of where he was, reaching out to caress John's shoulder and being met with a wall. He was so, so, so comfortable, limbs heavy and thoughts groggy.

He heard the light chatter from outside, Nikki eventually pulling open the curtain to inform him that the bonfire was happening, and it was dinner time.

"Mmph," he whined into his pillow, squeezing his eyes shut. "I told Wilbur I did want to go.. Clay.."

Nikki grinned, and George heard an oh-too-familiar clear of a throat.

“He’s here, George,” Wilbur laughed. Fuck.

“Hi, George,” Clay said, George craning his neck to see him from outside the gap, and groaning into his pillow immediately.

“Hi,” George mumbled, voice muffled into his pillow.

“So I’m guessing you’re.. not? ..Coming?” Clay’s voice was full of awkwardness.

“He’s a bit tired,” Wilbur said. Thank God for Wilbur.

“Oh, right,” Clay said. He sounded annoyed. Or shameful. George couldn’t tell.

George listened to his band make awkward small talk on their way out, heard the footsteps down the stairs, and the gentle roll of the bus as they stepped off.

He lay there, unsure, listening to the whooping and laughing from outside, trying desperately to fall back into sleep. Miss it entirely.

He checked the time. 7:43. Fuck.

Begrudgingly, realising that he couldn’t just nap his way out of seeing Clay, he climbed out of his bed, out into the kitchen-living room. He grabbed his phone, walking out into the bright gold and pink ombre that spilled through the windows of the bus onto the seat. He wandered out, seeing the bonfire, seeing a barbecue. Seeing Clay’s family, Clay’s backing band, The Discs. Clay. He was laughing to Sappnap, half-eaten sausage laid in-front of him. The air was chilly, goosebumps forming up George’s bony arms.

For such fake people, it was a pretty down to earth event.

George blinked. Wilbur saw him first, half way through a cigarette. He made a loud “oh!”, throwing the cigarette to the ground and stomping on it, gesturing for him to come over. George complied awkwardly.

“Oh, look who decided to show up!” he exclaimed. Clay turned to the noise, grin fading when he saw George. Wilbur turned to him, “Hey, *Mr. I’m Tired.*”

George rolled his eyes, “I couldn’t get back to sleep. And the food smells good.”

“Oh— I’ll show you the food, Anne made it,” he gestured to Clay’s family, George recognising his sister.

“Oh! Hey,” she smiled, “I was wondering where you were.”

The oldest woman gasped dramatically as he caught sight of George, “And, Clay, who’s this then?”

Clay scrambled for the right words, getting up to walk over to them nervous fully. “He’s the piano player of our backing band, mom, oh my God.”

“Oh, what does backing band mean?” The middle sister grinned. Clay and George both went red.

“It means backing band,” he glared, hands moving to George’s back to guide him away from them. “Emily, I am going to kill you.”

George felt himself be guided away from their family towards the barbecue. He must've realised that his arm was set around George's shoulders, because his movements stuttered, and he slowly moved his hands into the pockets of his jacket.

He slowly made a hotdog for George, squirting on tomato sauce and mustard shakily. The silence was deafening.

As George took a bite of it, Clay's eyes lingered on his lips. If it were days ago, George would've made a comment about it.

"Sorry about them," Clay murmured. George had half a sausage stuffed in his mouth, so he started to giggle, and a grin ticked up on Clay's face, and suddenly they were both laughing. It felt like an apology, because God knows they were both too obsessed and stubborn to say one using words.

"Why is it that all of your family assume we're dating?" George asked, eyes sparkling.

"Why is it that you eat a sausage like that?" He shot back.

They were back. Relief spread over George's body.

George shrugged, "ask my boyfriend."

Clay groaned in embarrassment, clearly remembering his intoxicated comments about John, "Oh my God."

"—Who is real, by the way!" George exclaimed, laughing. Clay leant down, hands moving to cover his flushed face.

"I'm so sorry," he groaned, a clear flicker of the truth coming through.

"What are you two laughing about?" Alex yelled. "Please tell me you aren't going to kill each other."

A grin formed on George's face, "Not kill, just beating me u—"

Clay erupted in embarrassed laughter, hand waving around George's face to try and get him to stop talking.

It was long before either of them would admit it, but they were getting along.

George shivered, hands running up exposed arms, "it's so cold."

"Oh, you can have my—" he pulled his jacket off, clearly realising the action's implications. He held it in his left hand. It was the jacket he'd worn the day when he had interrupted their practice, and bought his friend's love. "...Jacket."

George quickly grabbed it, without thinking, slipping it over his shoulders. It engulfed his small frame, heat spreading over his arms and back.

"I could steal this and sell it for a whole lot of money, you know," he grinned.

Clay shrugged, "Take it, I honestly couldn't care less. You look good in it any— oh no," he cut himself off, realising how that sounded and catching the smirk on George's face.

George gasped, idea flashing, "Wait, you have to sign it!"

“Wow, I knew you were a fan, George, but—“

“No, stupid, so I have proof that it was yours, when I sell it,” George grinned.

“Yes, because everyone obviously signs their own jackets,” Clay deadpanned. George rolled his eyes.

“Whatever, you don’t have to since you’re clearly so amazing—“

“No, of course I will!” Clay exclaimed, “I’m just saying it’s stupid.”

“You think it’s stupid, but of course you will?” George repeated.

“Yeah, I’ll take every chance I can to make you look stupid, obviously.”

George glared at him. He grinned.

“Sapnap! Give me a pen!” He yelled, pulling George over to his friend. Sapnap in return, rolled his eyes, reaching in his pocket and pulling out a black *Sharpie*. It smelt toxic.

Clay pulled George’s back towards his front, and hovered the pen over the back of his right arm. George could feel his light breaths against the back of his hair.

“Ew, get off me—“

“You were the one that asked!” Clay exclaimed, grabbing George by the hips and pulling him back in place, “Stop squirming.”

George couldn’t help but comply, going limp as soon as his firm hand pressed on his hipbones. If they were still in high school, if George liked him, he would be dying internally. But he wasn’t. Because he didn’t like him.

He heard the light rubbing of the pen against the leather, completely still. Sapnap looked over at them, and made a loud “*pfft*” noise.

“Shut up, Sapnap,” Clay yelled, he murmured to George after, “I bet you didn’t even know that isn’t his real name.”

“I did, actually,” George lied.

“What is it then?”

George pressed his lips together, silent, and Clay erupted with laughter.

Clay turned him around, “OK, done.”

George shimmied off the jacket, turning it over. It read, in scrawny handwriting, the black of the pen only slightly darker than the fabric, ‘*DREAM xxxxx, I love my fans*’ with a small doodle of a heart.

“What the hell!” George exclaimed, “You can barely even see it!”

“You can— it’s just dark, and you’re colourblind,” Clay deadpanned. “You should be grateful.”

George blinked. “How do you know I’m colourblind? Wow, can’t believe I have fans already.”

“Oh my God, for once in your life, shut up!” Clay exclaimed, laughing.

George grinned, slipping the jacket back on, “I’m gonna get so much money from this. I just used you.”

“Sure you did,” Clay rolled his eyes. The bonfire crackled and burned.

George stayed up there until night turned into morning— dancing, laughing, teasing Dream. For some reason, that felt like an appropriate name now. His way of contributing to the apology. Dream’s family left at 11, around when the censored, family vibe of the event had faded.

Sapnap had stood up on the table at midnight, shouting, “Who the fuck is ready to go on the Faceless tour?”

Everyone had erupted into boyish yells.

They stumbled back into the bus, falling into their beds and sleeping almost instantly. George suddenly understood why it was their tradition.

Chapter End Notes

hi!! hope you enjoyed that, it was v fun to write. THEYRE ACTUALLY ON TOUR!!!
WOAHHH!!! as always,, comments are very very appreciated, sorry for the wait!! <3

Beginning

Chapter Notes

hi so just a heads up— dnf aren't fully friends yet, they're in the transition between enemies to friends,, you will know when they fully dont hate eachother bc its a prominent story moment lmao THEY ARENT JUST BFFS AFTER ONE FIGHT
BAHAHAHA

also i might merge some earlier chapters, i know its slow burn but like we're at chapter 10 and theyre just now going on tour idkkkkkk i should fix that anyways ENJOY!!!!
love u sm

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“I’m *bo-o-red*,” Tommy groaned.

“Can someone remind me why I always have to sleep by him?” George said, only imagining how the nights in the bus would be.

“I had to for years, you’ll be fine for a few months,” Wilbur scoffed, stuffing his mouth with a burger.

They had their first performance tonight. The one that would kick-start the tour. They’d slept in the bus the night before, even though they technically wouldn’t need it until the day after the first performance. It was a part of the whole tradition— sleep in the bus the first two nights, even if you don’t need to. It had reminded George of the christian camps his parents forced him to go to, before they knew he was gay.

“I’m so tired,” Nikki said, “like— damn, we stayed up so late.”

“George, especially!” Wilbur exclaimed, “he was all ‘I’m not going’ until Dream gave him his fucking jacket!”

“I was having a great time, and then Gogy showed up,” Tommy said lightheartedly.

“Wow, *I’m sorry!*” George exclaimed.

“You were like—“ Nikki paused, “laughing at shit with Dream, what got into you?”

George glared at her, “I was laughing *at* Dream. Not with him. There’s a difference.”

“Isn’t that just bullying?” Tommy asked.

“Yes,” George stared, “he deserves it.”

Wilbur wiped the sauce off of his chin with a napkin laid on the café table. “Look, if bullying Dream is the way to get you to forget the performance tonight, I’m all for it.”

George groaned, sinking into his seat. “I did forget, and you just reminded me!”

“George, what do you hate about that one Ellen interview Dream did?” Nikki asked, changing the

subject quickly.

“Why would you—“

“Oh my God, it’s the worst thing on the face of his earth,” George started.

Wilbur stared at Nikki, “you’re enabling him, now he’s never going to stop and it’s going to be your fault.”

“—Exactly what Caroline is saying right now about Dream’s drug intake, and promotion and romanticisation of it in his lyrics,” George interrupted, grinning.

“Well, that just sounds like you care about him,” Tommy deadpanned.

George glared at him, “I couldn’t give two shits about him, I’m just saying he’s promoting drug use to his young audience.”

“Tell that to his face then.” Nikki said.

George paused. It would feel wrong. “Uh.”

“Jesus, what happened?” Wilbur said, “A few days ago you were telling him you wish he was dead and now you can’t give him genuine criticism of his work?”

“Yeah, he doesn’t deserve it,” George said.

“That’s weird, George,” Tommy said, “has anyone ever told you you’re weird?”

George glared at him.

“Well, I hate to bring it up, but we have to go practice,” Nikki said. George and Tommy groaned in unison, complaining something along the lines of *‘but I dont wanna’*.

“It’s insane how you two have a seven year age gap but you still manage to both act 11,” Wilbur muttered.

-

Arriving at the studio made the fear of them actually being about to perform set in. Guilt and worry grew and grew in the deepest pits of his mind, shame trailing down into his veins. So, so many people. Fuck.

They had only gotten to their second song when George’s hands started shaking, messing up the notes. To be fair, none of them were playing their best. Nikki, who was normally flawless, had been doing the beat half a second off, and Wilbur hit some notes flat.

“Fuck— I’m sorry, shit,” Tommy said, after having messed up a note, moving to rub his temple. “I can’t play for shit. I’m sorry.”

The band stood around, unsure of what to say. George offered a look at Wilbur, who stared at the ground.

“Hey, you’re—“ George spoke up.

“No, no, I’m really not,” he said, “Sorry. Sorry— fuck. I’m so nervous. Sorry. Let’s continue, I shouldn’t have stopped.”

The band nodded, picking up where they left off gratefully. George side-eyed Tommy nervously, trying to get any sign of emotion, but was met with nothing.

They finished awkwardly, mumbling good lucks. They could practically stay there for the rest of the day, so they sat around on their phones, listening to Dream's band practice.

George went to Wilbur. "Do you have any ciggs?"

Wilbur blinked, "what."

"Do you have any—"

"No, I heard you, I'm just confused," He switched his phone off, "George, you hate smoking."

George nodded slowly, rolling onto the back of his feet.

"Look, I know you think being edgy and inhaling nicotine would help," he said, "but you would hate it, I know that, and also smoking isn't going to calm shit unless you're already hooked," his tone became more soft, "we're all nervous, George. Alex, Sapnap, Karl, the band, Tommy, Dream — we're all nervous. This is new to all of us. But if you keep telling yourself that because you're nervous you're going to perform shit, you probably will." He switched his phone back on, "I don't really have the energy to comfort you right now. I'm sorry."

"It's okay, I get that," George responded.

George's mind flashed back to the advice Wilbur had given him in the past, trying to hold onto something. He steadied his breaths, trying to ignore the fact that he had nobody. That there was going to be thousands of people. He'd been to the stadium before, tested out the set. It would just be like that, but with people watching.

He tapped the floor restlessly. Whatever. It's— it's okay. This was what he wanted. This was what he signed up for. When he let Wilbur put their names under some email he hadn't even read, this was what it was asking for. Not just tension being built between him and Dream— no, actual fucking work. This was something he'd never forget and he hadn't even processed it would be happening yet. He sat for hours or minutes, silently calming his breaths, before he got up and left for the bathroom to be somewhere where he didn't just have to be dead silent. Down the hallway, he saw Tommy. His eyes were red.

"Tommy?" he asked, awkwardly. Fuck, the opposite of what he needed was to comfort someone. When Tommy didn't respond, he said the only thing he could think of, "are you okay?"

It was stupid— because obviously he wasn't, because his eyes were red and puffy and he had just been fucking crying. Tommy went to wipe his eyes with the back of his hands.

"Yeah, fuck, I just—" he stopped, staring at the ground. "I dunno. It's a lot."

George nodded, words failing. He knew that Tommy was just a kid, and he knew that he felt horrible for him, but he couldn't form it into a sentence.

"Yeah," he managed. "Do you.. need a hug?"

Tommy cleared his throat, "yeah. That might be good."

Tommy was the one to hug George first, surprisingly, pressing his face into George's shoulder. George moved his arms up to hug him back, patting him slightly. It was silent, and awkward, but it

was calming Tommy, and that was what mattered then.

Tommy had never been more than a joke, George realised. He had repeated it to himself— *'he's just a kid'*, but in the past had he actually cared or just wanted to have some reason to spite Wilbur. George hugged him, like it was his younger self, because while their situations couldn't be more different, they were feeling the same. And neither of them deserved to be feeling that way at 17.

"I.." George wasn't good with words, could offer long, internal monologues about himself but when it came to someone else fell flat. "I can play guitar. I can always go instead of you, I'm sure they'd have a backup-someone."

The offer was in vain, God knows how pissed Dream would be at the concept of backing out at quite literally the last minute, but giving him the chance to imagine himself not doing this was important.

"No," Tommy said, "No— it's fine, I can do it."

George's grip on him loosened, both of their arms falling to their sides.

George's eye caught Nikki down the hall. Thank God.

"Hey, are you guys OK?" she asked, hair strewn behind her ear.

"Yeah," Tommy said, "I'm just kinda nervous."

"Okay," Nikki said, moving closer to them to prepare her speech. Nikki was so effortlessly good at comforting, both her presence and words felt so calming and real. Nikki said, tone soft, "I.. I can't promise that I'll always be there to talk, you can't promise that of anyone. But you have family, you have your mum, she loves you, you have Wilbur, you have your dad, you have George—" George smiled encouragingly, "you have your friends, your life doesn't just revolve around Wilbur, they're all there, and they're amazing. You'll always have someone to back you up, and if you don't have any of us, you have the most important person, which is yourself."

The words were strung together, unplanned, unlike everything else George had said— templated, prepared. If it would be George speaking, he would stand, rambling on nonsense to a child who was about to be thrown into the absence of innocence, and George would have to watch, and let him. George was always surprised by the wisdom of Nikki's tone, and angry at how he couldn't have said this type of thing to John. Angry at how he couldn't be able to rub someone's back and tell them it would be OK, and make them believe it.

"Does that make sense..?" George tried. Tommy nodded.

"Yes," he said, "thank you. I— I'm really fucking scared."

George smiled sadly, "me too."

Tommy scoffed, "yeah, but everyone else trusts you at least. Me, I'm just the fucking dumb kid who got put in the band because there was nobody else. I'm replaceable, George. You're not. You're all everyone is talking about, you're Dream's favourite. I dunno, I wish people would fucking take me seriously."

George nodded, trying to ignore *'Dream's favourite'*. "I know how that feels, like— in high school, nobody believed I was actually getting bullied. Everyone just thought I was the gay kid who wanted attention, so overreacted about everything. Or even when they did see how bad it was, they just wanted to forget about it because they agreed with the people hurting me. It's the thing about

being a kid, I guess. Nobody trusts you. It fucking sucks.”

Nikki smiled at him. George hoped Tommy could find an inch of relatability in his words.

“Yeah,” Nikki said, “As a woman, I’m treated like that every single day, people patronising me, and talking to me like I’m stupid. And so many other people have the same experience, but so much worse. Doesn’t mean it makes ours any less valid, but it just shows that feeling like you’re not heard is a worldwide experience.”

“Yeah,” Tommy nodded. “Thank you, genuinely.”

“It’s OK,” Nikki smiled, “Now, we’re going to go out there, and kick ass, right?”

“Yeah!” Tommy grinned. It was slightly anticlimactic, how they hadn’t even arrived at the proper venue yet and had been giving each other pep talks, but it was still nice. Wilbur sat out with the rest of the band, unaware.

The venue was somehow bigger, more intimidating than the first time they’d visited. Because then, it had been a random, unimportant weekday. This was it, this was the night. They were all there, the thousands of people. Waiting.

“I’m so fucking nervous,” Nikki whispered, around an hour and a half until the performance. “I know I was talking to Tommy all therapist, but genuinely, I’m so scared.”

George nodded, unsure of what to say. “How do you, like— do that?”

“I just say what I’m thinking,” Nikki said, “Because normally, that’s what they need to hear.”

“See, even that was fucking deep and wise when—“

“George Davidson,” George turned to the familiar face in the doorway. Tina continued, “It’s time for your hair and makeup.”

George had nearly forgotten— he was getting his hair done specially, as requested by Dream.

“Bye,” he whispered to Nikki, who smirked, rolling her eyes. George walked over to Tina, who held a clipboard in her hand, light makeup decorating her cheeks.

“Gogy!” She said.

George scoffed, “Oh no, did you talk to Tommy?”

“Yes!” she grinned, “Gogy— that’s so cute! I wish I had a cute nickname.”

“Isn’t Tina your nickname?” George asked.

“No,” she deadpanned, “*Is George your nickname?* Oh— right here, come in.”

George was brought into a room with the label ‘VIP’ on it, Tina scanning a tag hung around a string on her neck against the door, it unlocking. She opened it with her left elbow, “Hello Dream!”

Right. George walked in slowly, savouring every step where he didn’t have to see Dream’s face.

“Gogy!” Dream yelled, smiling.

“Oh my God,” George said, covering his face, “you can not call me that.”

“Okay, Gogy, it’s just so cute!” Dream mocked. George glared at him.

“Shut up.”

“No,” he smiled. “I’m gonna wearing the outfits on the album cover tonight. Thoughts?”

“The one with the fishnets?” George scoffed, “please.”

“Do you not like them?” Dream asked. Tina started working on his hair, plugging in the curling iron.

“I like it, it’s just you look gay,” George said.

“Okay, says you,” Dream teased. “Chicks dig that, androgyny. And I look good, too.”

George stared at him, “you are so self obsessed.”

“So are you, I just have people who pay me to encourage it,” he smirked, “You know— I thought you’d be more nervous.”

George stared, “I am. I literally just got here.”

“Alright,” he said, “I’m kinda nervous.”

“I don’t care,” George muttered, getting out his phone. “Oh my God, would you look at that? My boyfriend texted me twenty minutes ago.”

“And you missed it?” Dream said, tone shifted slightly. “Wow, devoted.”

George glared at him, opening his phone and calling John. When nobody answered, Dream erupted in laughter.

Please leave a message after the beep.

“Hi, baby,” George cut in, grinning. Dream glared at him. George continued to look at him, saying sweetly, “I just wanted to check in. How are you? We should chat soon. Love you so much, never forget that. That’s all, bye!”

He clicked off, smiling.

“You’re not funny, you know,” Dream said after a pause. George erupted in obnoxiously loud giggles, covering his face and kicking his feet under the desk. As he calmed down, he made eye contact with Dream through the mirror, smiling into his hand. Dream glared at him.

“Oh come on, loosen up!” George exclaimed. When Dream only rolled his eyes, grunge-fulled and edgy, George changed the subject, “Hey, my band said this really weird thing this morning. They said we were like— getting along last night.”

Dream blinked, “we weren’t?”

“No?”

“I mean, yeah, no, of course not,” Dream backtracked, “that’s so weird. Have you sold my jacket yet?”

George laughed, “Oh my God, I need to soon! Tina— Tina, how much money do you think one of Dream’s jackets would sell for?”

Tina smiled, perking up at the mention of her name, “Uh, I dunno. Like, a thousand and something maybe.”

“More than a thousand, it has my sweat on it!” Dream exclaimed. The reminder came as a surprise to George— Something he hadn’t thought of. Huh.

“Okay, Dream, your hair is done,” Tina said, spinning him around in his chair. George blinked at it, it looked good. He was one again reminded of the length of it, how you could pull on it. If anyone was pulling it.

What the hell? George tapped his chin, trying to forget that thought, nodding as Dream got excited about how good it looked.

“Okay, I need to go in the back room to grab the stuff for your hair, George, I’ll be two seconds,” Tina said, walking into the backroom.

Silence filled the room. They were alone.

The private meeting, the gift of clothes, the bathroom fight. Nothing good happens when they’re alone.

“Uh,” Dream said, “So actually— there’s something I just wanted to say,” George nodded slightly. Dream continued, tone hushed, “so, like, I know I already sorta mentioned this, but I’m sorry for the thing at my party. I was high, and when I’m high, I get aggressive. It’s completely my fault, and I’m just— I’m, uh, I’m really embarrassed about how I acted that night. So yeah, sorry. It’s not just you, but you’re part of it.”

George stared at him. He didn’t think he would..

Dream stared at him expectedly.

“I’m sorry too,” George said, “I shouldn’t have pushed you. Or the whole Clay thing, that was too far.”

Dream stared at him, eyes flickering between George’s eyes and his lips, breathing shallow, “y’know, we could try—“

“Okay guys, sorry for the wait!” Tina called. Dream’s face fell for a second, mouthing a *‘fuck’* and falling back into his chair. “Dream, sorry, I’m going to be doing George’s hair and makeup in one because we’re kind of short on time.” She said, “George, you go out in an hour.”

Nerves poured into George’s guts, almost pulling him away from whatever Dream could’ve said. He didn’t know which he wanted to use as a distraction.

“Oh no,” he groaned, “Tina, why do I have to go out and perform?”

Dream chuckled, “it’s your job. You’ll be fine.”

“Yeah, easy for you to say—“

And just like that, they snapped into comfortable mindless banter. Where George didn’t have to worry. Mid way through, while George was having a pale powder plastered onto of his skin,

Dream left to get changed into his stage outfit.

“Bye!” George called, “I won’t miss you!”

Dream smiled, flipping him off. It felt comfortable. Tina continued to paint George’s skin.

The crowd roared, muffled stamping and screaming heard behind the walls. So harsh, so red and black, so intense. So far away from London.

“I’m gonna be sick,” George managed, “the don’t even want to see us, they didn’t come here for us.”

“We’re getting paid,” Wilbur offered. He looked so out of it, so unfazed. He never understood it—never understood why it mattered.

His band continued to speak, but they became muffled out in George’s ears. George tried to ground himself. The half drunken cola can in his hand. Dream’s words, ‘*y’know, we could try—*’. Try what? Try what, Clay? What should we do?

Minutes passed painfully slow, waiting. Anticipating. Wilbur grinned. This was what he wanted. Do it for him, do it to get away from John, do it to tell Dream that you—

“Okay, you guys can go on now.”

The bodyguard’s words sharpened the audio, pushing him back. He couldn’t move. He thought about how they’d all scream, expecting Dream, how they’d all look at George eagerly. How they’d catch every flaw, and be judged on it.

George felt someone tap him on the back. He turned to see Dream, wearing the outfit that haunted him, androgynous and teasing, whisper in his ear, “You’re gonna be shit. Have a great time.”

George glared at him. “Fuck you.”

He grabbed the hands of his band members, leading them out, up the stairs, onto the stage. Because fuck Dream. Fuck him and his stupid outfits, fuck him and his seductive whispers, abstract songs, smudged eyeliner and superiority complex. Fuck him and his gifts, his apologies, his messy hair and his v-line. Fuck Dream.

George walked past the flashing lights, the screaming so loud it made George’s ears ring. He walked onto the stage, and saw faces. Faces that all wanted Dream. Faces that all adored him.

George’s hands settled atop his stupid fucking piano, because why was he here if not to prove he was better than Dream? Why was he here if not to show that he could, that he was worth it. And suddenly the faces turned foggy, unimportant.

“And a 1, a 2, a 1, 2, 3, 4!”

Chapter End Notes

i'm pretty proud of this chapter,, again i dont have a laptop so i had to write it on my phone lol. a lot of these scenes ive been waiting to write for awhile. ALSO UH

GEORGE IRL COULD LIKE BE IN WILBURS NEW BAND (LOVEJOY)'S NEW
MV AND LIKE DID I MANIFEST THAT?? bahhahaha thank you for reading!!!
comments of any kind are appreciated (preferably /pos, my ego is weak)

This tour

Chapter Notes

i wrote this chapter in such a different way to literally every other chapter in this fic, and it somehow turned out well? also,, yes,, oh my god lovejoy. Did i manifest that accidentally? possibly??? but hollyyyy shit that ep was so good!! literally exactly how i pictured the discs music to sound,???? and the taunt mv. omfg. george is the prettiest bitch on this planet and i will be forever sorry for making him such a dick in this. ANYWAYS enough about the only band to ever exist Enjoy :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

That night, they had ran home, whooping and cheering. Tommy could've fucking smoked and it wouldn't have ruined Wilbur's mood, he was at such a high.

They had done a performance, and it was fucking alright. Sure, they weren't showstoppingly incredible, but they were fucking good. And actually performing took much less time than anticipated, and once it was done George was left with a rush.

"Oh my God, that was so fucking good!" Wilbur exclaimed, as soon as they were down the hallway. The adrenaline rush of playing still lingered in the air heavily, a bounce in their steps. George glanced at Tommy, who grinned.

They all had a good time.

"Nikki," George said, "You were so freaking good at the drums— like. The crowd loved you."

"You were amazing!" Nikki exclaimed, then turned to Tommy, "and you, you did so well. Honestly, I don't know why you worried."

"Thanks," Tommy said.

"George— *yo*," Wilbur exclaimed. "Oh my God, you did so fucking good on the guitar! You're getting so good, honestly. It was *incredible*."

George's eyes caught sight of him. Fully dressed up, eyes littered with dark glitter. Outfit extravagant, and unapologetic. He stood in the VIP room, for performers to relax, drink backstage and do whatever was desired. Seats lined the walls, piles of merchandise was folded upon one of the counters.

George ran to him, every movement full of energy.

"*Oh my God!*" he exclaimed, slightly unsure as to why. He heard some comment from his band in the hallway.

"I heard you play," Dream said absentmindedly, eyes moving to George's and twinkling. "You were shit. I was right."

"Shut up," George groaned, "That was like— fun. I didn't expect it to be actually fun, like, I expected it—"

“Okay, you can tell me after,” Dream laughed slightly, a certain fondness to his voice. “You’re too cute.”

You’re too cute.

“Don’t call me that, you fucking freak!” George laughed, letting the comment fly over his head, unexamined, “Did you know that the thing that inspired me to perform so well was beating your arse?”

“I bet it was,” he sounded so smug, thoroughly amused.

“So you admit it,” George made up, “you think I performed well?”

“Hm,” Dream stopped to think, “I mean, debatable.”

“I hate you,” George laughed, flopping down on one of the couches. Dream smiled at him.

“I have like 20 minutes until I go on,” he said.

“Ok,” George smiled, elbow propped up on the elbow rest and leaning into his hand, “Can I... Talk to you then?”

Dream rolled his eyes, mumbling a, “you make no sense.”

George paused, “So can I talk?”

Dream scoffed, “Are you high?”

“No,” George said, furrowing his eyebrows and laughing, “obviously. Do you think I just did drugs up on stage?”

Dream shrugged, trying to hide his smile by not looking at George directly. “Wouldn’t be a new concept.”

“Whatever, I’m gonna talk to someone else, since you’re being boring,” George sighed dramatically, getting up.

“I can’t believe you’re admitting to actually wanting to talk to me,” Dream laughed. George glared at him.

“No, I didn’t—“

“Yeah, yeah, whatever,” Dream laughed, “I need to do vocal warmups, and fucking perform, remember idiot?”

George scoffed, arms folding across his chest, “Okay. Go then.”

“I will,” Dream smirked, speaking slowly. “I’m nervous,” he added on.

“You know what’s so crazy about that?” George grinned, leaning back in his seat. “I don’t care.”

Dream rolled his eyes, muttering something under his breath and shaking his head. He wandered out, door falling open and closed. His movements were surprisingly soft for someone who was minutes away from performing in front of thousands.

George’s heart still beat rampantly, he wanted to scream and run and be kissed. Kiss someone.

George played with the fabric of his shirt excitedly. Holy shit, that was so fun.

“You alright?” Wilbur called from down the hall. George turned, smile plastered to his face. Wilbur stood at the doorway, leant neatly.

“I’m *amazing*,” he grinned.

“Where’d Dream go?” Wilbur said, a slight drag to his words.

“Off to do ‘*vocal warmups*’, whatever that means,” George said, fully knowing what a vocal warmup was.

“Dude, that was so good, though,” Wilbur grinned, “Like. Oh my God, that was so good— that was so good!”

He sounded like he couldn’t believe it, and to be fair, neither could George. Everything had fallen in place, so fucking well. George ran towards him, and before he could think about it— hugged him. Because if it wasn’t for Wilbur it couldn’t have happened. Because he was grateful. Because Wilbur was an incredible friend.

Rarely was George the one to show affection so directly, but fuck, he couldn’t help it. A light sting grew across his cheeks from smiling so hard. He hugged him tight, and Wilbur immediately reciprocated it, wrapping his arms around George’s neck, George’s around his stomach.

“Thank you,” George pulled away, smiling.

“For what?” Wilbur asked.

“Taking me here,” George said, “giving me the courage to come.”

“No— dude, thank you!” Wilbur exclaimed, taking his beanie off to run his hands through his hair. “if it wasn’t for you, this band wouldn’t have been recognised as much as it has been. Thank you for coming, and for— fuck, when we arrived in America, you only just officially joined the band. That’s crazy.”

George nodded enthusiastically. The excitement spread from them to the audience as, it was easy to see the way they screamed and danced and yelled. It was perfect. He started giggling, Dream’s performance growing closer and closer.

“You’re getting so good at guitar, by the way,” Wilbur commented on, relaxing into the beige leather couch.

“I know,” George smiled. “I should start using it as my main instrument.”

“George, I love you, man, but like, we just performed for *Dream*,” he joked. “I don’t wanna talk about instruments.”

“You brought it up!” George laughed. A grin grew up on his face.

Screams and stomps from outside grew louder and louder, George’s attention shifting to the noise.

“Did Dream get on stage already?” George asked, eyes flying between the door and Wilbur. He stood up, wandering towards the door.

“The countdown timer probably just— *Oh my God*,” Wilbur said, as George left out to where Dream was.

He stood against the wires and blinding lights, red reflected across the veins of his neck. His nose, across his eyes and v-line and messy hair. Someone was attaching a microphone to his face.

Seeing him like this, George got it. He belonged here. Amongst the screams and bodyguards and stench of gasoline and alcohol, he fit in.

Wilbur had been right, the countdown had just started, only 5 minutes until the real performance began. The crowd had been chanting a row of '*Dream! Dream! Dream!*'s, the sound growing stronger, anxiety inducing rather than encouraging. It sounded overwhelming. Dream looked overwhelmed. Good.

"George!" he turned to Alex, who had called out to him. Dream caught his eye. It was hard to hear him over the crowd, "Not gonna lie, you were shit."

"Why is everyone saying that?" George groaned, Alex laughed, high pitched and comforting.

"Dude," he exclaimed, "I'm so fucking excited, holy shit! *Holy shit!*"

George grabbed him by the arm, saying loudly, "It's okay, no doubt you'll outshine Dream."

Dream side-eyed him. George smirked. Alex laughed, clapping his hands together energetically. His movements were always so strongly emoted, almost as Dream's were but heightened.

"Oh my God, toxic!" He exclaimed. George rolled his eyes, mirroring Alex's smile.

"Yeah, rude, George," Dream said, it being the first time he had spoken, shaking his head in mock disappointment. His voice quivered slightly.

The screaming and chanting from the audience grew louder. Cult-like. Dream flashed a look at Sapnap.

"Three minutes!" He exclaimed, tone unreadable, rubbing his friends back.

"I thought you were nervous," George cut in.

"Of course I'm fucking nervous!" Dream muttered. "I'm just talking to my band, right now. Leave, maybe?"

"You're annoying," George said. "I came here to support you."

"So you're my supporter?"

"I'm—"

"Can you two not do this right now?" Sapnap cut in, laughter evident in his voice but underlying seriousness in his words. "We're about to perform."

The crowd's volume suddenly heightened, as though somebody had played with the volume and turned it up to full. They looked up at the timer almost in unison— 60 seconds read on the screen clearly.

"Shit," Dream groaned, throwing his head back. He was nervous. Alex patted his arm excitedly.

"58!" The crowd yelled, chanting transitioning into counting.

"57!"

The bodyguard started leading Dream up the stairs.

“56!”

He leant across the black fencing, grinning at George.

“55!”

“Wish me luck.” He said.

“54!”

“You’re gonna be shit!” George called back.

“53!”

Dream rolled his eyes, flipping him off from up the stairs, and disappearing out of George’s line of vision. George took it as an opportunity to run around, through the VIP room, to the other entranceway, where he could see the stage. He counted with the crowd, yelling out loud, closer to where Dream stood. He hoped he could hear him.

“Two, One!”

After around a second of waiting, Dream jogged on. George pressed his fingers to the inside of his ears from how loud the crowd screamed, feeling the floor vibrate beneath him from the movement.

The crowd screamed and yelled and hollered deafeningly loud, dragging on for minutes. Dream’s face reflected on a bigger screen above the stage that hadn’t been turned on for *The Discs* performance, gratefully. George looked up, giggling loudly. Dream caught his eye from the stage and smiled.

“Hello, Florida!” Dream said once the crowd calmed down, which, of course— just made the crowd scream again. “Wow, oh my God.”

George hadn’t thought that it was possible to give a monologue on stage, especially on such a big one. Wilbur would speak at their tiny performances, when there was only tens of people in the room. No, but of course he would speak. Of course.

“So,” Dream said, microphone creating a slight echo, “Earlier, you just had *The Discs* play for you — can I get some noise for *The Discs*?”

The crowd hollered and whooped, George felt himself flush slightly at the gesture, grin growing wider. He caught eye of his band behind him, who must’ve wandered next to him silently, clearly wanting to see.

“I know, I know,” Dream said, wandering across the stage. “Cute pianist, huh.”

George scoffed, and the crowd laughed, and screamed. Nikki side-eyed him, smirking.

“So, we actually have another band with us today!” Dream exclaimed, looking back at his backing band, and lights turning onto them.

“We have my good friend Sapnap, on guitar along with me,” he said, Sapnap performing an impressive snippet example of his abilities. “Amazing, right? Okay, and on bass, we have Alex Quackity everyone! Alex, show us what you’ve got!” Alex performed his own solo example. It was planned— Dream’s entire performance had a more or less backbone of directions they would

have to work off. “And, last but definitely not least, we have Karl Jacobs on drums!” Karl did his own part, playing impressively. Dream’s voice was different to the way he would speak when they were alone, more professional. Planned.

“Now!” Dream exclaimed, “Who the *fuck* is ready for us to play together?”

The crowd screamed. Dream smirked, “that’s what I like to hear.”

The first song kicked in, and the entire crowd screamed, the floor shaking once more.

George rolled his eyes, looking up at the stage. He’s the worst. A grin flickered up on his cheeks. Dream started to sing. Wilbur, Nikki, and Tommy had all started dancing like a fucking idiots. He scoffed at his feet, trying to hide his grin. *This was his life, huh.*

“C’mon, George!” Wilbur exclaimed, dancing crazily, tall and shameless. Nikki started twirling George, which made him laugh in embarrassment, trying to gain balance.

Dream caught his eye from on the stage again, and smiled.

“That was so fucking good!” Sappnap yelled. Dream and his band has all ran off and down the stairs together, yelling and celebrating loudly. George stared at Dream as he wandered off, chin glazed with sweat and laughing. A bodyguard immediately handed him a bottle of water and a towel to wipe his forehead with, while moving to remove the microphone from around his ear. He couldn’t see George.

“I missed performing so much,” he laughed, taking a gulp of the bottle of water. He swallowed, continuing as the microphone was removed from his ear, “I mean, to be fair, I’ll get tired off it really quickly. Still, though.”

“Dude, your vocals were like, so fucking good,” Sappnap exclaimed, doing a shitty impression of what he sounded like.

“Did you hear my voice crack at that one part?” Dream responded, wiping his cheeks down with the towel, running it through his hair, “Oh my God, I wanted to die right there.”

“Yeah, you were really bad,” George grinned, cutting into their conversation. They both cut off, staring at George. Dream instantly groaned, rolling his eyes.

“Oh, fuck off!” He laughed, glancing down at the baby blue towel in his right hand. “Do you want a towel with my sweat on it?”

“Ew, wha—“

Dream through it at George’s face, a light moisture and strong stench pressing against his cheeks. It immediately dropped to his hands, George making a disgusted noise which made Dream nearly topple over laughing.

That night as well, they barely got a wink of sleep, raving about ‘how good’ their not-terrible performances had been over beers and friendly laughter.

“I think we can all agree,” Dream said, pausing for affect, “that George did the worst.”

Alex, Karl, and The Discs all laughed at this, nodding excitedly.

“Wait, wait, wait,” George said, “Didn’t you literally call me cute—“ Dream groaned, covering his

face in embarrassment, “—Because I wouldn’t be coming for someone you just flirted with a couple of hours ago.”

“Not this *again*,” Sapnap said,

“I wish I could go one day with either of you without the other being brought up. It’s exhausting, man.”

“Your mother is exhausting,” Dream shot back.

“That is not a flex,” Sapnap murmured.

“Wait, so—“ George grinned at Dream, “You’re saying he talks about me?”

The prospect had been brought up by Tommy of all people weeks before, but for it to be reinforced by another person was hilarious. Dream talks about him? Cute.

“Y’know what? I actually won’t tell you, because that’ll just encourage it,” Sapnap said.

“I don’t,” Dream said, deadpan. Oh he absolutely does.

“He does, he does!” Karl laughed, curled up in a ball on the couch.

At one point, Wilbur left, jumping upwards and announcing, “I need a cigg. I bloody deserve it.”

“*Oi bl-u-y de-serve eit*,” Alex mocked. “Ciggies, eh, Gogy?”

Dream turned to him, “Do you smoke, George?”

George shook his head immediately, “No. I hate it.”

Dream rolled his eyes, scoffing, “of course you would.” He paused. “I thought you’d like the feeling of sucking on something, that’s all.”

George’s mouth hung open. “Wow.”

“Sorry,” he laughed.

“Do you smoke, Dream?” Wilbur asked, holding his lit cigarette in his hand.

“Not really,” Dream shrugged, laughing, “Not cigarettes, anyways.”

George didn’t know why it came as a surprise to him. He had always pictured Dream as the physical embodiment of smoke, a walking metaphor. How he would fill George’s lungs and cause him to choke, how he always managed to be there. He just.. always assumed.

“You used too,” George said, “in school.”

Dream nodded. “I stopped. A lot of things about me have changed since high school.”

George scoffed. Of course he would say that.

They got back late, light buzz from being in such a foreign environment didn’t mix well with the bus having to be driving while they were asleep. Needless to say, George kept most of the bus up from his loud puking.

“Wait— so,” Karl said, sitting cross legged on the floor of their bus, them being the only two that didn’t want to go out for a ‘*stretch*’. “You can like, play guitar as well?”

George nodded, “yeah! Electric in particular.”

“Sick!” Karl exclaimed, “Yo, me too! I mean, not electric, but. That’s so cool!”

“Do you have one?” George asked, “we could like, play.”

“Yeah, actually, wait—“ Karl stood up, reaching out his palm for George to grab. George took it, standing up with him. “Dream has like thirty guitars, I swear. He has like five on our bus alone.”

He was lead out and into the other bus, George only then realising that he hadn’t actually seen Dream’s bus.

“Holy shit,” he breathed, as he climbed in. If their bus was nice, this was a five-star luxury hotel. That was what it looked like, as well, nearly double the size. Golden light illuminated the bus from the high ceilings, what seemed to be a fake-cobble floor underneath their feet. Their couches were brown, with a bohemian theme that resembled Dream’s house decor. Every window was blacked out, and a TV screen against one of the walls.

“What the hell, your bus is so nice!” George exclaimed. Karl laughed.

“I know, right? Must suck having the 2017 version of this, *ew*.”

“It does,” George sighed dramatically.

Karl had been right, only from the entrance there was an acoustic guitar laid against the nearest couch. Karl grabbed it, wandering out again. George was annoyed at this, he wanted to explore every crevice of Dream’s temporary home, see every difference. He wanted to know all about his life, so the knowledge that he wouldn’t be able to see even one bedroom would haunt him for nights.

“Come on, Dream will be pissed at us.”

George stepped out of the vehicle sorrowfully.

Arriving back in his own bus, the “luxury” aspect had been slightly damaged, but it was still nice nonetheless. They both climbed into Wilbur’s bed, a light sleepover aspect to the atmosphere, full of giggles and new friendships.

“Play something,” George said, “you go first.”

Just as Karl grabbed the instrument, pressed his fingertips against the neck, and nearly began to strum, George’s phone rang from his bed.

Karl groaned, and George climbed out, looking for where it laid against the duvet.

As soon as he saw the contact name, pools of dread filled his guts.

“Shit..” he said, wandering outside the bus to speak, where Karl couldn’t hear. He answered the call, “John?”

“George?” The voice on the other end of the line said. *Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.*

You can’t just say what you want to to make Dream jealous.

“Yes?” he asked softly, biting down on his bottom lip.

“Did..” John laughed, “did you mean what you said? In that voicemail?”

No.

“Because, fuck, George,” He laughed. He sounded relieved. “I’m sorry I didn’t respond, I was asleep—“

“No, don’t apologise,” don’t say anything. “It’s okay.”

“That, that really just means the world to me,” he said. “Really.”

George pressed his lips together. “Okay.”

“Okay?” The smile was evident in his tone. “I— how did the first performance go?”

“Good,” George said, looking down the hallway, out the window for something. “Really well, actually.”

“That’s incredible,” John said, “I’m proud of you.”

George pressed his head against the wall of the bus. Why did he have to be so good?

“Thank you,” he said.

“Okay,” John was smiling, “That’s all I wanted to say. Bye.”

“Bye,” George said, craving the moment for their conversation to end.

After a pause, John added, “Love you.”

“..Love you too,” George lied.

The phone cut out.

“George!” He heard Dream yell, storming into the bus the next morning after that one. George blinked, rubbing his eyes. He had just woken up, shirtless only wearing black sweatpants. Dream’s eyes stuttered over his form, pausing for a second before walking further towards him.

“What?” George groaned.

“What did you do with my fucking guitar, you little british fuck?”

George yawned, eyebrows furrowing. “Your gui— *ohh*. It’s over there.”

He gestured lazily to where it lay against the fridge. Dream stopped.

“Oh,” he said, tone calmer. He shook his head, growing angry again, “Why did you take it?”

“Because I wanted to,” George smiled. “Don’t you have like.. thirty?”

“I...” Dream tried, “Doesn’t mean you can take them!”

“Y’know what’s crazy about that?” George said, “I did take them.”

Tommy laughed slightly. They both glared at him. Dream walked towards George, staring at him.

“You think you’re so funny, don’t you?” Dream said.

“Yeah,” George agreed. It was hilarious the way Dream’s face scrunched up in anger.

“Don’t take my shit,” he said.

“You’re dumb,” George sighed.

“You’re dumb!” Dream yelled back, grabbing his guitar and storming out. “You’re dumb! *Die!*”

The door slammed shut.

George stared at the closed door.

“I didn’t mean that!” Dream yelled from outside. George scoffed.

This tour was going to be interesting.

Chapter End Notes

that was a lot LMAO. im sosososo excited to share the next chapter with u like something ive been planning for Sooo long happens so excited Aaahhh!!! as always, comments are greatly appreciated:)

Truces

Chapter Notes

hi!!!, just a little heads up that there is a scene in which the characters are having a conversation about sex— not having it but it is there. if you want to skip over it it happens after the second performance part, there will be a line that announces they're speaking about it, but keep in mind that there will be full on sex scenes later in this fic! enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They had been driving at a rather slow pace to arrive in Georgia, George wondered if it was that practically none of the roadies wanted to have to deal with George's motion sickness for more than an hour at a time. Nikki had offered to drive them at one point, when the roadie looked half asleep. He had thanked her for her kindness, but George could tell that she had done it for their safety rather than as a sweet offer.

They would stop at multiple different studios to practice, and George was met with yet another thing he had forgotten existed— groupies. He had been confused for one himself a couple of times, had to show and confirm his VIP pass, and that he wasn't just some pretty British twink who wanted to get in Dream's pants. Sappnap would talk to them the most, always have a girl wrapped around his arm or sat on his lap. His band would tease him about it often.

During one of the times in which the bus didn't have much to go, George had stayed in one of the studios, skimming through a book he had picked up— a period piece about a boy and his dog. It was utterly boring.

George had glanced up absentmindedly, when he saw Dream, slugged against the wall, as soon as George saw him he jumped.

"Do you have a fetish for invading my space or something?" he exclaimed, holding his hand to his chest. "Jesus, that scared me."

Dream blinked, "I'd say the same to you, invading my bus."

George scoffed, "it was Karl's idea. Also, yours is so nice!"

"Yours is my old one from my 2018 tour," Dream said, "most opening bands get vans. Try having an inch of gratitude."

"..You gave us your old tour bus?" George repeated, smirking.

"No, it's not like—"

"Wow."

"Please don't—"

"You're so nice to me, Dream," George said, mocking. "We could've had a shitty van but nooo.."

“Sto-op.”

“You just *had* to give us your own old tour van,” George grinned.

Dream’s eyes darted to the side of the room, clearly searching for an excuse to change the subject.

“Is that chess?” he pointed at a set that was laid on one of the shelves.

“No, it’s Pictionary,” George deadpanned, rolling his eyes. “Yes, it’s chess.”

Dream ignored his comment, grabbing it down from the shelf and placing it against the table. “Lets play, then.”

George stared, grin creeping up on his face, a memory of a similar situation flashing back.

Through pale walls, textbooks, neat uniforms, religion and insecurity, boredom during any breaktime would spike. They school only had school-owned computers, which were unavailable during lunch breaks. Something about what exactly they would do if they had full access to the internet, what sinful websites they would explore.

George would spend his downtime with a chess board. Playing, pathetically, against himself, to practice for any visit to his grandparents.

Dream had passed him, whilst one of his knights had the white’s pawn at gunpoint. He had leant against the wall, arguing with one of his teammates about something.

George’s heartbeat had began racing, hands quivering and having a hard time focusing on a silly wooden game.

“No, I can’t be there!” Clay had exclaimed, trying to keep his voice down, but failing. George made sure to steady his movements, only sneaking glances. Sure to make Clay think was just a nobody, because how could a nobody be so perverted?

“But, it’s final game of the season,” the teammate said, british accent strong. “Dude, you gotta be there. Come on, you’re like our only chance at winning!”

“I’m failing everything,” Clay’s voice faltered slightly, emphasising the everything. “I haven’t seen my brother in months, and he finally came to visit, I aren’t going to waste that for one fucking game!”

“The last of the season!” His teammate argued. “Coach could kick you, reals.”

Clay’s voice softened. It made George’s heart melt. “He wouldn’t do that. Come on, man. You’re good! We can still win!”

His teammate sighed. George slaughtered a pawn. You ungrateful fuck. “Okay, it’s just.. Just really disappointing, dude.”

He left the room.

Clay’s eyes had lingered on the door, fidgeting with his hands. George peeked at the way they spread out, and fixed back into place. He pulled on each finger stressfully, a soft click every time it left and pushed back into his socket. George felt sweat line the pits of his uniform, hands growing hot as he held each pawn.

And Clay looked at him. He reciprocated something. It was everything.

“You’re good at that,” he had said, absently. As a distraction. To George, it was everything. He savoured every word, kissed every syllable.

Words failed, George trying desperately to savour every moment of it. To him, Clay was a deity. All knowing, worshipped.

“Thank you,” he managed. Clay had smiled slightly. Scared of more silence, George added, “were you watching?”

“Sorta,” Clay said, letting his bag fall over his shoulder, pulling out the chair of the desk across from George’s, and sitting on it casually. His eyes had moved to George’s trembling fingertips, lingering on the way he pressed the pawn back down onto the board.

“Sorry about that,” Dream added, gesturing at the door. Second comment. He wants to talk to you. “It sucks, my entire fucking team wants me to play, instead of spending time with my family.”

“I’m sorry,” George said. “Is there anything I can do?”

Clay scoffed slightly, “You would do something?”

George nodded instantly, blowing his cover of a stranger. Fuck it. George would do anything. Anything.

Clay smiled. Then, the bell rang across the school. Loud. As fast as everything George had wanted for months and months of waiting fell into place, it broke apart again. Before he had a chance to make an impression, before he had a chance to be anything more than a forgettable interaction. George had seen it as some messed up message from God, that what he was feeling was wrong.

“Shit,” Clay had groaned, getting back up from his chair, pushing it in disrespectfully. He pulled his bag over his shoulder, looking up to George. “Oh— uh, maybe we could play sometime.”

They never did.

George stared up at the rockstar in front of him, blinking away silly memories.

“Yeah,” George said. “Only if you’re prepared to fucking loose.”

Dream rolled his eyes, scoffing. He grabbed the box, let the pieces fall on the board, and began setting them up.

“I’m going to let you be white, because I’m *nice*,” George smiled.

“Well..” Dream said, grabbing the white pieces. “I mean.. depends of what your definition of ‘*nice*’ is. Because if you mean kind and caring, I dunno.”

George placed the row of pawns first, “Oh? What ‘*nice*’ would i be then?”

“Just brushing over my fabulous insult, okay,” Dream immediately swerved from the topic.

“Using ‘*fabulous*’, okay,” George hit back, “you’re gayer than I am.”

Dream scoffed, muttering a “fuck you” and going back to setting up his wooden kingdom. This set was different to the one George used to use at school— more tall, geometric.

“During high school, did you really do this every day?” Dream asked.

George laughed slightly, “Uh, well, not every day. I did have some friends, unlike you now.” Dream snorted as they both finished placing the pieces down, George smiling at the board.

“Okay,” Dream’s index finger lay over the ‘go’ button on the timer that he had pulled out of the box. “Are you ready?”

George grinned, “Ready to destroy your arse? Absolutely.”

Dream’s eyebrows raised at the bold remark, and clicked the timer. He looked down at his board, thinking.

“You’re so shit,” George grinned, “Oh, you’re *so bad*.”

“Shut up,” Dream shot back, moving a pawn forward two squares and switching the timer.

George sighed, “Predictable,” he mirrored Dream’s move. The timer switched.

Dream stared at the board.

“Do something,” George said, leaning towards him, British accent decorating his tone. “Do something already, I don’t have all d—“

“Do you ever learn to shut up?” Dream shot back, quickly doing yet another rookie move. George smiled at the power he had. Dream knew for a fact he was better.

George’s hands skimmed across his pieces.

“Do something,” Dream mocked.

“Shut up, I’m—“

“Move the pawn,” Dream said.

“No!”

“It’s what you obviously should do!” Dream exclaimed.

“I know more about this than you, actually,” George shot back. He moved the knight.

“That was just.. dumb,” Dream said, “I guess you’re all talk.”

“Move your pawn then, since you insisted on me doing it,” George said.

Dream bit his lip slightly, “No.”

George raised his eyebrow, leaning back. “No?”

“No, I mean— fuck,” he moved his pawn, switching over to George’s turn. George instantly killed it using his knight.

“Well.. that means nothing,” Dream said, “the game just started.”

“I know,” George grinned, squeezing his dead piece in his right hand. “So, what are you going to do now?”

“Win,” Dream responded, making a rather bold move. George killed that piece as well.

“Two,” he said cockily.

Dream stared at the board, “I don’t like this anymore.”

“Pussy,” George grinned.

Dream stared at the board, eyes widening, and quickly slaughtering one of George’s. He laughed at the face George pulled, mocking.

“God, you really expected you could just treat me like that, huh George?” he smiled. “You really are all talk.”

“Whatever,” George shrugged. “I still have two of yours dead, whereas you have one of mine.”

“Do you want a fucking medal?” Dream asked. “I have a few.”

George clenched his jaw.

They played in silence for minutes, smirking and scoffing at the board. The first game ended exactly as George had predicted it, pinning Dream’s king in a corner, holding a knife to it’s throat and grinning as he looked up and announced, quiet and smug, “Checkmate.”

Dream pressed his plump lips together. “I could’ve won that. You just got lucky.”

“I told you!” George grinned, “I told you I’m good at chess and you didn’t fucking believe me! Well guess what?”

Dream rolled his eyes, clearly butthurt. “Whatever.”

George grinned, “God, I just won! Where’s my medal? Huh? Where’s my Grammy, hand it over.”

Dream laughed. “I didn’t bring my Grammy with me, idiot.”

“What?” George exclaimed, “You have a Grammy and you don’t flaunt it everywhere?”

“I’m not *that much* of a dick,” Dream said, laughing slightly.

“Well..”

“Oh, shut up,” Dream rolled his eyes, pulling the chess pieces towards him to gather them up.

“So,” George grinned, “Another game?”

Dream’s eyes glanced from the board back up to George. “I would, I— oh fuck, I have a fucking interview.”

“Oh,” George said, slightly discouraged. He shrugged, “good. Wilbur’s way more fun to play, anyways.”

“Yeah, thank God I don’t have to spend more time with you,” Dream rolled his eyes.

The room felt empty after he left.

At least they had got to play one game that time.

The second performance was definitely easier than the first— still, anxiety hung thick in the air

before the performance. George guessed it always would.

The worst part would be standing, waiting for the announcement that you can run on. Waiting to see thousands of faces, all who held great expectations for how exactly you were going to do. Nikki ran on first that time, and Wilbur mimicked Dream's performance in the way that he introduced himself.

"Hello, Atlanta," Wilbur said into the mic. He didn't have the power of Dream, the crowd didn't scream at every syllable— but he had similar charisma.

Performing didn't feel real, it all blurred together, you kicked into fight or flight and made sure not to mess up, and then you were pulled off, pushed back into full control. It was disorientating, but it would be worse if George let himself take note of every detail in his movements, every note he hit slightly wrong when Wilbur needed backup— how he held the guitar.

George's favourite part was after the performances, when both bands would kick back and speak. The topic they had settled on was kinks.

"I mean, I dunno," Sapnap said, "I think it's weird when relationships have like dom/sub undertones when they're not having sex. Like, I wouldn't make a chick call me daddy outside of the bedroom, y'know?"

"You make chicks call you daddy?" Dream smirked, his friend hitting him playfully. "No, yeah. I agree. And like, if you have kinks or, like, fetishes in a relationship you shouldn't break up with your partner if they don't reciprocate them. You could actually have a spark with someone, and you're gonna end that because they don't like feet? Like, that's so *weird*."

Karl laughed slightly, whereas Sapnap nodded.

"George, what are your boundaries and shit with your boyfriend?" Alex asked. Dream perked up from across the room.

"Uh.." he tapped his chin, "I mean, I'm fine with a lot of things."

"What's the most intense thing you've done?" Sapnap asked. George flushed slightly.

"Uh, well, it wasn't with my boyfriend, but—" he laughed slightly, "Like, painplay? This guy used to like to slap me and shit."

Dream cleared his throat, shifting in his seat.

"Woah, that's kinda intense," Karl laughed, "Would you like— with knives?"

George shrugged, "Depends who it is? I mean, I don't *love* pain, it's just not something I'm opposed too," he looked up at them, "choking is hot."

"Vouch!" Karl yelled, laughing. George blushed, covering his face.

"Are you a choker or a chokee?" Sapnap asked.

"It... depends," he said, rubbing his throat absentmindedly. "Like, I dunno. My hands aren't really big enough to choke someone that good, I mean, I've choked.. myself? And like, this person in university used to be really into me being the dom, so I choked him, but mainly I'm the one being choked."

“Weren’t you into that, Dream?” Sapnap asked. Dream, in return, scoffed, clearly trying to act uninterested.

“Look, I—“ he laughed, shifting in his seat, “It— it doesn’t matter. I, I dunno. George, I can’t believe you’re into that. I thought you’d be really vanilla and boring.”

George smirked, “you thought about what I’d be into?”

Dream seemed to forget how to speak, “God, you— you’re so fucking— you’re annoying. What? I didn’t say that. I’m— I— I’m leaving.”

George grinned, “wow, I thought you’d be a little less easy than this. Can’t handle one conversation about sex? We get it, you don’t get your dick wet.”

Dream stood up to leave.

“Have fun wanking to the idea of me choking myself!” George called. Alex laughed, repeating ‘*wanking*’ under his breath and shaking his head.

Dream spun around and glared at him, “I hate you. You’re on thin fucking ice, Davidson.”

George scoffed at the sudden use of his surname, Dream storming into his room.

“I thought you guys were getting along,” Karl pointed out, as soon as the door closed.

“I dunno,” George shrugged, “I mean— not really? Why has everyone thought that?”

“Because at the bonfire, you two were like.. cuddling and shit!” Alex exclaimed.

“We weren’t cuddling,” George started.

“No, no, no, you guys were like— making out,” Sapnap laughed. Karl giggled loudly, hand slapping over his cheeks.

“And Dream is like, always calling you cute!” Alex exclaimed, “he is, isn’t he? Two fucking seconds with that man and it’s suddenly, *‘Oh, George is so cute, oh my God, do you know he wore the clothes I gave him? He’s so cute, but no, I hate him, grrr.’*”

George scoffed slightly, “he doesn’t say that.”

“He does it around you!” Karl exclaimed. “It’s like, just talk to each other and work it out! Jesus Christ! It’s like— it’s like an averagely written enemies to lovers fanfiction!”

George rolled his eyes at the inclusion of ‘lovers’ in his joke, shaking his head lightly as they all burst into heaving laughter, nodding.

“So,” Caroline said, “It’s been awhile since we’ve talked— forgive me, I’ve been so busy.”

Nikki nodded, “really, it’s okay. We understand.”

Caroline smiled at her sweet words. “Thanks. Really, that’s too kind,” she sat down on one of the sofás. “So, how’s the tour been for you all so far? I’m aware it’s just the beginning, but it’s still important to know.”

Wilbur went on to ramble to her about his opinions on the tour, how incredible the opportunity has

been, and everything else you're supposed to say to make your manager more willing to be on your side.

"George," she said. "How's things going with Dream?"

George blinked. "Uh. What?"

"Are you two still going at each others' throats?" she said. "Because, and I had this conversation with him as well— it's bad for both of your images, and the experience for everyone around you on tour. We can't have you talking shit about him to other people. He had an amazing reputation, some silly high school discourse isn't going to ruin that for him." her tone was as stern as her words, "I could fire you at any moment. I suggest from all of us, that you either internalise your dislike for him or just make up. Understood?"

George blinked, feeling as though he had been pulled into the office by a teacher. Pools of embarrassment filled his guts. "Sorry, ma'am."

"It's okay," she smiled. "Just a warning."

"Is it really Dream's old bus?" George asked. Caroline nodded, laughing slightly.

"Yup," she said, "I was just thinking about that— back when he was just a lil baby singer. Look at him now."

George nodded awkwardly. She asked everyone about their thoughts so far, and if there was anything she needed to do. George still felt like he was in trouble.

"Okay," she said. "You have an interview next Tuesday, as always, I'll email you the details."

Nikki smiled, "Thank you."

Their manager's demeanour had seemed less stressed, but still slightly off. George murmured some of his embarrassment to Nikki once she had walked out of the bus.

"Oh come on, it's so easy!" Wilbur exclaimed. He did another action, pressing his hands down against his head.

"How is this a movie?" Nikki asked.

"Oh, uh.." Karl snapped his fingers, "what's it fucking call— *Hairspray!*"

Wilbur shook his head, continuing to move in between multiple actions. George had forgotten how shit he was at charades.

"I give up," George groaned, and they all nodded in agreement.

"It was *Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World*, you idiots!" He exclaimed, "Y'know? Because this is like Ramona with the hair— and then the seven exes? How didn't you get that?!"

They all started protesting, exclaiming about how fucking stupid that was. Wilbur looked incredibly disappointed.

"And, like," George cut in, "that's such a weird movie to pick. Like, obviously, we won't guess that— chose like *High School Musical* or something."

They all nodded in agreement, sitting down and falling into somewhat of a comfortable silence.

Sapnap sighed, opening his phone, “Someone should go and get Dream— he’s the only person I can think of who’d be actually good at this.”

“I will,” George said, which made them all groan. They had all been in the studio— the same one George and Dream had played chess in days before, when Dream had randomly announced he was going out for fresh air. George pulled on the jacket he had left on the table, which just happened to be Dream’s. He left that room, went through the hallway to the outside cool air, his friends yelling something inappropriate about him getting him, and slid the door closed.

He wandered down the steps, taking only a few seconds to catch Dream’s silhouette, sitting on one of the stars, towards the edge of it.

“Oh my God, you annoying bitch, get back inside!” George called out. “We’re playing charades and Sapnap says you’re ‘good’, which would be cool to see because I actually haven’t seen one thing you’re good at yet!”

When he was met with no answer, he stopped. “Dream?”

He wandered down the stairs, reaching him and awkwardly falling next to him. Dream sat with his knees held to his chest, face turned away from George. For someone so tall, he seemed to cradle himself. He seemed small, delicate, broken.

George’s throat closed up.

“..Are you okay?”

Dream turned his head to look at George, eyes red and puffy. It mirrored the interaction with Tommy in the hallway, but it felt different. The tone had changed.

The sky was a canvas of pink, but the confines of George’s vision didn’t let him see it see it.

Dream lifted his arms, bringing them to his sides, rubbing his nose slightly. “Yeah.”

His voice was croaky, weak.

“That’s not true,” George said slowly. Dream smiled slightly.

“It’s not,” he sighed, smile fading, “It’s not..”

George didn’t know what to say.

“Do you want to..” he tried, “talk about it?”

Dream shrugged, “I, uh. I dunno. I’m just super fucking burnt out. Earlier I had this realisation— this is all I’ve built my life to be. That album, that was my chance to prove myself. And now it’s over. Now what do I do?” he looked George in the eyes, “I can’t just be a fucking musician forever. I’ve already written my best, if I write anything else I’ll just disappoint, and if I quit.. then. Then I’m just a could-have-been. You know?”

George squinted. He reached his hand out to touch Dream’s bicep. “I’m sorry.”

Nikki had said say what you are thinking, because it’s what they need to hear, but what he was thinking was just.. mean. That George knew this would happen. That he had been right.

So he didn't say anything. Dream looked away from him again. The wind was cold.

"That's my jacket," Clay murmured.

"It is," George muttered back. "I haven't sold it yet."

"You wouldn't," Dream laughed, hollow.

He was right.

"I've just," Dream started, "I've gotten everything I wanted but nothing I needed my entire life. You know?"

"I know that too well," George said. Dream rolled his eyes, leaning backwards, pulling away from George's grip. Looking up at the sky. They could hear unimportant conversations muffled from inside. George pulled the jacket closer to him, trying to keep warm.

"The only thing that ever really got taken away from me was my dad," he confessed. George's mind flew back to his family of predominantly women. George had always thought..

"I didn't know, I'm sorry," George said. Dream shrugged, akin to his teenage self, closed back with so much pressure lying on his back.

"I guess I was jealous of you," George confessed. Dream looked back at him. "I just.. you get everything. Nobody questions you, nobody stops you. You can pick and choose at femininity when it pleases you, but for me it was just a title I couldn't rub off."

Dream nodded, "I know. You don't have to apologise—I'm the one that fucked up."

George laughed slightly, relieved at the truth, "I wasn't perfect, either, though. I never am, so nobody cares when I'm the victim."

Dream stared at him, "I care."

"You made me the victim," George said. It was sharp, and George could tell from Dream's face the way it stung, but nonetheless, he meant it. It needed to be said in a situation that couldn't be perceived as lighthearted.

Dream scoffed at the ground, "I.. fuck, you're going to kill me for this."

"What?" George said.

"I.. I liked you too," Dream cringed, "in high school."

The words made George's skin grow cold. The talking stop from outside. His heart beat.

George's tongue went dry, "What?"

"Yeah.. I, uh," he rubbed underneath his ear, avoiding George's gaze. "That's what that private meeting was for. I thought we could like, I dunno. Laugh about it, or something."

The explanation didn't help. George's mind grew blank, just an abstract shock of *'what?'*

George didn't know what to say. He let out an airy, "fuck," full of shock. "So you don't like me anymore?"

Dream shook his head instantly. “No.”

Oh.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” George settled on, through the hundreds of questions running through his brain. “I would’ve done.. anything.. to hear that.”

“I know,” Dream said. “I’m sorry.”

George hated it, but he forgave him.

“It’s okay,” George said, “it was like.. seven years ago? It just. You know,” he raised his hands, gesturing around at the busses, and the stage tags and microphones and alcohol. “Right place, wrong time.”

“Yeah,” Dream laughed sadly, taking a swig of the beer that was held firmly in his right hand.

George watched his Adams apple bob, watched the way his head tilted back, hair being thrown away from his forehead. The way his plump lips curled around the stained glass.

“What..” George started. *What the fuck was he doing*, “what changed? What made you not like me anymore?”

Dream smiled sadly, “the fact that you have a boyfriend, I guess.”

Was that a confession?

Dream pulled away from Georges gaze, finger swirling around the cap of the lid absently. “How are things with him, by the way? John, right?”

George didn’t know what to say. Fuck.

“You don’t have to, if you don’t—“

“Yeah, I don’t really want to talk about it,” George said, “I want a distraction.”

“A distraction?” Dream’s looked up feverishly.

“..Yeah,” he said. “I don’t know how.”

Dream laughed— “I could think of a couple of ideas.”

George glared at him playfully, Dream bursting into laughter and exclaiming, “I’m kidding! I’m kidding, George!”

He said his name like it was honey.

Dream stood up, the darkening pink sky reflected onto his tan skin. He looked down, reaching his hand out to George, and pulling him up, walking him further down the steps. They stepped down onto dry grass. His hand held George’s wrist, and he fell backwards into it, pulling George with him and giggling.

George scoffed. He paused for a second, smirk growing on his face.

“So,” he said, “you like boys.”

Dream groaned, hitting him with his left arm across his stomach and moving to cover his face. “Oh my God.”

“You do though,” George hoisted himself up onto his right elbow, smiling. “When did you find out.”

“When you fucking walked into my life, you idiot,” Dream laughed. It cut out into the air, slipping away with the breeze into an uncomfortable silence. “Yeah. I don’t— I dunno, I don’t really like labels. Cause I do like girls, as well. More often, probably.”

George rolled his eyes, “I bet you tell yourself that.”

“You’re the worst,” Dream laughed, rubbing his eye. Their laughter faded out into a stilled silence, George falling from his elbow down to his back. The wind burred.

“Hey,” Dream said, softly, “could we try.. not hating each other?”

George blinked, turning his head to lay it on the grass. “you mean like, be friends?”

Dream mirrored George’s movement, moving his head to lay horizontally against the ground. A strand of hair fell over his eyes. “Yeah. Friends.”

George scoffed, looking “that’s kind of pathetic. We’re barely a week into the tour and we’re already giving into friendship.”

Dream smiled, “yeah. Kinda.”

George felt the grass press against the back of his neck. “I mean, to be fair, we already have been for awhile.”

Dream turned, “Hm?”

“Friends,” George said, “after the bonfire. We just didn’t admit it.”

Dream chuckled, “Who is we? I was ready to be your friend when you fucking arrived in Florida.”

“That’s so stupid,” George rolled his eyes.

Friends.

George glanced at the way Dream’s face was slightly illuminated by the light from the van, and left sparkles in his green-bronze eyes that met George’s, his smile creeped up into a grin.

That could work.

Chapter End Notes

FINALYYYYYY yay wowza. hope you enjoyed that!!!! they are officially in their friends era of their friends to enemies to lovers, and theyre gonna be lovers for while— lovers isnt the end lmao. this is sloowww burnnn. ive had that last scene prewritten for a couple weeks, i came up with it on a tramp and immediately got home and wrote it. also chess scene— if anyone got the reference that was made i will literally make out

with you. (hint: its a musical). thank you for reading!!! comments are greatly appreciated!! <33

Rosary and Promises

Chapter Notes

hiiii!!! sorry for the wait,, ive been really busy and kinda had writers block but im actually really proud of this!! also the song george plays is real and u should listen to it when he starts playing :) enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“What did you and Dream even talk about?” Alex asked, tone light. He was sat on the counter of the bathroom, rubbing on eyeliner.

“Just like—“ George laughed. “You won’t believe it.”

“What?”

“We agreed to be friends,” George said. “Like— I’m one of his yes-men as well now. Oh my God. I mean, I kinda see the appeal of it. Just getting all of his money. I just can’t believe I gave in.”

George turned to look back at Alex, who’s expression was unreadable. He paused, clearing his throat and clearly trying to think of a way to word his thoughts.

“Y’know, I am not just Dream’s yes-man,” he said, “and I am not yours either. I hope you know that. I’m nice to you because I’m a nice person, not because I’m desperate for white approval. Or I want his money. I aren’t *‘using him’*, we just get along as business partners. I’m more your friend than I am his, but I can stop that.”

George blinked, and nodded, words hitting him. “Yeah. Totally. I— I never thought that.”

The slight lie hung in the air.

“Yes, you did,” Alex said, “I’m not saying this to be mean. I’m just telling you. I work with Dream because I have a passion for music, not because I’m shallow and using him for his fame.”

“Thanks, I—“ George started. “I’m sorry I thought that.”

“It’s OK, man,” Alex smiled, eyes looking up at George through dark bangs. “And I aren’t going to be your yes-man either. I’m my own person.”

“I know that,” George spoke softly. He understood.

“Good,” Alex nodded. “I just— I thought that I should clarify.”

“I genuinely think that you’re so cool,” George said. “I was trying to impress you— I never thought of it the other way around.”

Alex grinned, “Great. Cause I actually don’t like you, I hope you know.”

George rolled his eyes, “Oh my God, not you as well!”

“Oh my god, is it our flirty enemies era now that you and Dream are dating?” Alex gasped, eyes

widening. George groaned.

“I hate you,” he said, tone lighthearted.

“Let’s go!” He exclaimed. George reached up his hand to help him down from the height, and he glared at it. “I hate you so much— you really think that we’re friends, huh.”

“You literally just—“

“How are you so annoying, oh my God.”

“You’re actually the annoying one! Actually!”

They bickered loudly, until Sapnap opened the door and scoffed.

“George, can you have any normal relationship with someone where you guys are just nice?” He asked.

“I know, right?” Alex exclaimed.

“Well, I mean,” George pointed out, “I have Dream now. So.”

Alex made a gagging gesture, which caused Sapnap to laugh.

“I feel like my sleep schedule is just utterly fucked since we started touring,” Wilbur blew out pools of smoke into the air, George watching it drift away. “Like— name one night we got actual good sleep. Just one.”

“I could sleep better if Gogy didn’t decide it was puke-o’clock every midnight,” Tommy said.

“Hey!” George exclaimed, “I’ve been, like not throwing up recently! Actually!”

“Didn’t you last night?” Nikki asked.

“False alarm,” George said. Tommy murmured an ‘ew’.

They had traveled from Atlanta to Savannah, the slow pace of the bus rolling against the soft road. They had stopped in a studio for Dream to be interviewed in about business, which they had all been invited to because it was incredibly posh. Their shoes tapped against polished floors as they walked through rooms with high ceilings and modern art decor.

They sat down on rounded couches, feeling underdressed and bored, clearly not fitting into their surroundings. They sat there for half an hour, making tired conversation, as there was nothing better to do. Dream wandered past, dressed in pearls and mid-conversation with a shorter man who looked to be in his 60s, in a black suit.

Dream caught his eye, stopping fleetingly as his lips upturning into a smile and mouthing a soft “hi.” George smiled back at him, returning the favour awkwardly.

“Yeah, uh,” Dream stopped, moving to introduce them. George tried and failed to keep the smile that grew on his face. They hadn’t really talked since they agreed on the truce, that being two days or so ago. “Yes! This is the opening band on my tour. That’s— that’s who I was talking about,” he gestured at George. “George.”

The older man nodded, reaching his palm out to firmly shake George’s hand. “Nice to meet you,

George.”

George nodded uncertainly, completely unsure as to what ‘*who I was talking about*’ referred to.

“Do any of you know where my backing band went?” Dream asked. Wilbur gave him a quick answer, and they went to follow his directions.

As soon as he left the room, Nikki gaped at George, staring in between the doorframe and George. “We’re you too just— did you—“

“Holy fuck,” Wilbur said. “You both just looked at each other. And smiled,” he grabbed George by the shoulders. “What happened?”

“What did they do to you?” Nikki whispered, over dramatic. George rolled his eyes, shaking his head.

“We literally only looked at eachother?” George said,

“I mean, Caroline asked us too.”

Tommy stared, “Yeah, a lot of people ask you to do things. Doesn’t mean you’ll do them.”

George scoffed at the slight insult.

As the time crept on, all of the band slowly agreed on leaving to go away to go and buy food. Wilbur said George should wait— (“*That guy talked to you specifically, they might need you for something,*” *He had said*)— George wondered if he believed that or just wanted an excuse to not have him around. Shit talk his love life.

A light Spring rain had started to patter against the roof, hearing it fall and drop down onto the floor. George pressed his face against the wood of the table, the light smell of polish clear through his nostrils. He let his eyes flutter shut, trying to get a wink of sleep after the lack of it. He felt the tips of his eyelashes press and curl up against the table, laying his hands above his head, elbows bent. He prayed for the sudden shift into sleep, but his brain continued to buzz abstractly.

He could’ve laid their for another hour or only five minutes, until he heard soft footsteps echoing against marble floor. He stirred slightly, but decided on trying to stay still.

“Oh my gosh, is he asleep?” he heard Dream murmur, George’s stomach immediately filling with warmth.

He felt Dream stand over him, and let his eye flutter open. He saw Dream’s figure above him, smiling slightly, head tilted to the left somewhat reminiscent of a puppy. George leant backwards, finally stretching his arms.

“Did you fall asleep?” Dream asked again. George shook his head, mid-stretch.

“No, but I could’ve if you didn’t wake me up,” he shot, tone groggy.

“Hm,” Dream said, smile pressed to his cheeks, “Sorry.”

“You’re not.”

“I’m not.” He grinned.

George groaned slightly as he got up, stretching out his legs.

“Remind me why you came here again?” Dream asked, arms crossed against his chests and sleeves rolled up to his elbows. He had a Rosary necklace against his shirt, the same one he had worn on the album cover, and during the first performance. His hair fell out under his ears and down his neck, almost as though it was a mullet. Had he cut his hair? You could see the way his freckles dotted across his cheeks, on the upper of his nose.

“..George?”

George blinked, “hm?”

Dream’s eyes grew into a cheeky squint, smirk slipping up his cheeks. “Were you just distracted by how hot I am?”

“What?” George felt his face heat up, “I—“

“Oh my god!” Dream laughed, grin strong. “You totally just checked me out!”

George glared, scrambling for the right response. “Sounds like you’re not used to it,” worked.

“Fuck— sorry,” George corrected himself, “I need to get used to this nice thing.”

“I miss when we hated eachother,” Dream sighed, “you were cuter.”

“*Friends*, Dream,” George said slowly and jokingly. Dream giggled.

He wandered into the room across, prompting George to follow after him. In it had a brown grand piano— one of the only splashes of colour George had seen in the entire house.

“I hate the interior here,” he groaned, which made Dream giggle lightly, grabbing him.

“Shh, shh! They’ll hear you,” he whispered into his ear, which made George laugh back. His tone grew louder as he said, “Yeah, totally. It’s so boring!”

“Look at that piano,” George said, gesturing at it’s modern theme and geometric build. “It’s *hideous*.”

Dream’s hand pressed against the instrument, spreading out his palm and feeling the wood. “You could.. play something.”

George stared up at him, “Play what? Why is everyone asking me to do that?”

Dream smiled, “Because you’re talented.”

George felt flush run across his cheeks from the praise. “Thanks, Dream,” he mumbled.

“Genuinely. You’re one of the most talented people I’ve met,” he said, trying to keep George’s eyes to his. George refused this.

“Okay,” he breathed. He had to have known what it was doing, because Dream pressed on.

“And you’re—“

“Okay, okay, I get it!”

George cut him off, trying not to let the conversation or his mind tiptoe anywhere completely inappropriate. “You think I’m... I get it, okay? Thank you.”

Dream smirked, “I think you’re what?”

“You think I’m talented, is that good?” he whined, “Thank you, y-you too.”

“You think I’m talented as well?” Dream asked, cockiness creeping into his tone.

“Yes, *oh my god.*”

He stopped. “How am I talented, exactly?”

George groaned, “oh my *God*. You’re just— you’re obviously talented! You’re like, good at singing, and talking with people, and you play the guitar really well.”

Dream grin was clear on his face, “Thank you.”

“Thank you.”

Dream paused, smiling, “Are you going to play anything?”

George paused, nodding and sitting down. He scoffed, “What do I even play?”

“Just play what you played when you first came to my house!”

George blinked, trying to regain the memory. It came back to him in a flash— playing as Karl had requested. “Oh.”

“So, are you going to play it?” Dream spoke after a pause. George tapped the action frame.

“Maybe,” he said, “I mean— I played *Tchaikovsky - Romance*, right?”

Dream blinked at him, “Well, I just heard it. I can’t tell you the name.”

“It was like—” he cut himself off, pulling the chair out to sit down on the stool. He lay his hands above the keys, and as a demonstration, began playing from mid-way into the piece. He played for half a minute or so, before he realised that the transition would start, so he stopped abruptly. The room felt empty without it.

Dream nodded.

“No, I don’t want to play that,” George said, upfront.

“Why?” Dream blinked. “It’s just— why? It’s good.”

“Yeah,” George agreed. “But it’s not the right mood.”

Dream rolled his eyes, throwing his hands up in the air, saying exasperated, “Well, play one that’s the right mood then, princess.”

Princess.

The nickname came naturally, mocking. Dream faltered one it had left his lips, it seemed as though considering taking it back. George just scoffed, letting it fly over his head as it was intended.

“Okay,” he said, “I will.”

George searched his brain for what piece exactly would be correct to play at that time, running through folders and folders of songs he had learnt in the past.

“Are you going to play—“

“Yes!” he exclaimed, “I actually just thought of it.”

“Play it then! Oh my God, you could’ve played like eight by now!”

“Do you have any idea the length of any classical music?” George asked. “It wouldn’t be e—“

“Just play it, oh my god.” His tone was laced with laughter, exasperatedly pushing on some words. George didn’t respond after that, instead giving him a look, and beginning to play *Franz Liszt - Liebestraum (Love Dream)*.

Music filled the room once more, booming and echoing through every wall. This piece was mysterious, welcoming. Eerie, romantic. Hopeful. It made you feel like this moment in your life was worth remembering— like it was something worth romanticism. It teetered and pulled and pushed, androgynous and kind. George wondered if Dream heard it the same way. He stared at him intently, looking at the way his pale fingertips pressed against black and white keys. George couldn’t tell if he was impressed, or going through an internal analysis of his technique, ready to constructively critique any mistake he came across. It grew angry, unapologetic. As Dream was. Rebellious— loud, and then softened out into, again, somewhat of a soft romance. A touch of a hand, a caress of a thigh. The unspoken message within wordless music.

George avoided his eye, playing this hideous piano, letting it fade away softly, as all things should. As he finished, the light pattering of the rain against the roof was all that could be heard. Dream stared at him, eyes glazed over slightly.

George didn’t know what to say, “..Was that alright?”

“It’s beautiful,” Dream murmured. His eyes met with George’s, and George aloud them to. “Really.”

Had he heard it? Really?

“Thank you,” he mumbled, lips parted slightly. Dream stared at him.

“It— it sucks that its not really pretty to show of electric guitar,” he joked, trying to make light of intense feelings. Because it’s easier that way. George was grateful for it. “Then we could both play.”

George nodded, laughing slightly. He tapped the piano. “Can you play anything?”

“On the piano? Not for shit.” Dream responded. “Obviously, I’m alright at other things.”

A grin flickered on George’s face, tone flirtatious, “What other things are you good at, Dream?”

Dream reacted in stages, eyes widening first, followed by a slight flush colouring his cheeks, then laughter bubbling up in his throat, smile evident on his face. Green eyes crinkled at the corners as he fell backwards, flustered. It was contagious— George couldn’t help but giggle slightly. He was pretty when he laughed.

“Oh my God, guitar!” Dream exclaimed, “I meant guitar! Shit, George!”

George was going to comment on his lack of denial, when his laughter faded out and they were left with the awkward silence of the rain.

“I hate this,” Dream said after a pause. George stared up at him, hurt.

“What?”

“No— not you,” he stared around the room. “This.”

“This place?”

“I hate the confines of it,” he said, “I wanna be young. I wanna scream, and smoke, and laugh, and fuck whoever I want without it becoming a news article. Before... I just. God,” he turned to George, “promise me we can be young together?”

“I’m not young, Dream.” George said. Though it was untrue, he was only 24, he could tell that Dream understood he didn’t think like that. Didn’t crave rebellion, dreaded it.

“Can you pretend?” he asked, “For me?”

George blinked slightly. “I...”

For me?

The youth in him cried— *‘you would do anything for him. Anything’*.

Unsure of what he was promising to, he agreed. “Alright.”

Dream had grinned.

George had left, still uncertain as to what exactly *‘youth’* represented in Dream’s eyes. He mentioned it to Tommy— the worst person to mention it to, as he just questioned if he had joined some type of cult.

Their third performance felt different, more friendly. That’s how things feel when you’re friends— George thought dumbly. But Dream’s tone to George had definitely shifted.

The other thing that felt strange was that George had expected flirtatious comments to cease. That they couldn’t just throw those around anymore, cause they couldn’t shoot them down with a rude remark. But, instead, Dream would still tease him about whatever thing he did that was *‘cute’* or throw around pet names, and George would remark how jealous he was of John.

Getting their hair and makeup done, Dream had insisted to Tina, exclaiming to her about how he needs to wear more makeup.

“Come on, just like a pink lip or something!” He exclaimed, grabbing onto Tina. “He would look so cute. For me. Please?”

‘For me’ seemed to be a phrase Dream would use regularly— at George, at Sapnap, at Caroline, at Tina. He would creep in, make you feel special. And George watched as it worked, as Tina sighed, grabbing a glittery eyeshadow and tapping a colour that Dream exclaimed was *‘so pretty’* though to George it looked brown. He believed him, letting the brush tap onto his eyelid. She added mascara, and then Dream requested “a tiny, tiny bit of eyeliner.” For that, she used a pencil, smudging around the corners. George had seen her do it on Dream, but it felt less unpleasant than he imagined when it was happening to him.

She pressed on blush, and lipgloss that felt smooth against his lips. Dream tapped his chin, shaking his head slightly, “No— no, it looks too...”

He grabbed George's chin, running his thumb across his bottom lip. George tried to ignore the way he could easily be grabbed, let his lips be smudged. Dream stopped for a second, thumb paused on his lip. He looked.. shocked.

"Yeah," he breathed, quickly pulling his hand away. Some colour had rubbed off. "That is so not fair."

"What?" George grinned.

"Wearing makeup is my thing and you look better than me in it," he scoffed, turning George's chair around and huffing. George started to protest, when he caught sight of himself in the mirror.

He looked.. wrecked. But in a really hot way.

A darker colour was smudged against his lips, dark eyeliner smudged across his eyes. The regular blemish removal seemed perfect. He looked...

Dream rolled his eyes, grinning. "Whatever. I'm sure this'll get you more *Tiktok* simps."

George turned to smile at him, "I should've done this sooner. I look really pretty."

Dream seemed to inhale lightly at the comment, and stayed silent until Tina started styling his hair.

"It's a mullet, right?" George played with the back of Dream's hair.

"It's like— a slicked back wolf cut," Dream corrected, scrunching up his face as George pulled on his hair at the back of his neck. "It's *hot*."

"I like it," George grinned, "Tina, that was a great idea. His hair was getting really long."

Dream was handed his rosary necklace that George had caught his eye on the day earlier, and pulled it over his neck.

"I'm thinking of getting like—" he gestured to the front of his hair. "Like, a green streak or something."

"That'd be cool," George nodded, imagining it in his head. It would be.

Alex had grinned at him as he walked on, yelling at him that he looked like a whore. George had scoffed.

The performance itself was nerve racking, as always, but it felt as though a weight had been lifted off George's shoulders as he no longer felt the need to prove himself. He had become comrades with the enemy, though it was humiliating to admit.

The song slowed, turning into Nikki's solo. This audience in particular lit their phone torches, creating a sea of swaying lights. George saw the way her face lit up, how her voice became lined with a smile.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading!! i might be going back to edit some earlier chapters bc tbh some

of them are really bad... who was gonna tell me..... also i feel like this is the first chapter ive written like the aesthetics?? of it?? idk so i wanna fix that anyways as always comments are very appreciated,, love you <3

This isn't High School, idiot

Chapter Notes

hiiiiiiii!! minor tw for very very very slight mention of religious trauma at the start of this chapter, and very very slight implied nsfw content :) im in a bit of a writers block rn, not at all because of motivation for this story, just in general. but i finallyyy got my laptop back so thats good!! i hope this is alright, love you <33

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“George,” the interviewer said. A woman, this time. This interview was more spacious, more expensive. A small crowd watched them. George felt as though he was on a 90s television show. “You play keyboard. When did you learn this?”

“Well,” George laughed slightly, nerves prominent. This was so much worse than performing. Because performing, every move is preplanned. “I learnt because my mum forced me too. A nun taught me.”

“A nun?” The woman laughed slightly.

“Yes, I grew up Catholic.”

“But you’re not anymore?” The interviewer asked.

George shook his head slowly, “no.”

“What made you give up your religion?” She asked, hands folded in her lap.

“Uh,” George went back and forward between saying it outright. He had thought about it the night prior, stating it would be his official ‘*coming out*’. The media didn’t know. “My sexuality, probably.”

The interviewer blinked. “Meaning..”

“I found out I was gay,” he said. The audience all made some noise, quiet, but there. “That kinda stopped it. When I found out, I just knew Christianity would be more of an obstacle than something I would like, embrace. So.”

“Mm,” she nodded. “So your family are still Catholic?”

He didn’t want to talk about this. “Yes.”

“How did they feel about your sexuality?”

How did they feel about your sexuality?

Well.

They weren’t... unsupportive. They just proved to be distant. When George realised he was gay, he realised that his parents were strangers who lived in the same home as him. No real connection

other than blood.

He stared at the interviewer. At her braided brown hair. At the audience. They came here to be entertained, not to hear that.

“Um,” he said. “They’re OK with it, I guess.”

“OK? Expand on what you mean by that.”

“They don’t really care,” he said. Half-true, they pretend not to.

Thankfully, the interviewer moved onto Niki next. Asking her about growing up German, the culture shock that hit moving to London for uni. She asked Tommy about being young and his push into fame, and he responded with humour, then moved onto Wilbur, asking him about leading the band. It was a different style interview. More digging for personal information, trying to get something angst-worthy or inspiring.

Eventually, of course, the interviewer brought up Dream.

“Now,” she said, smile and a lighthearted tone falling from her lips. “As, I’m sure everyone in this room knows, you are all touring with the musician *Dream*. In the first show to this tour, Dream famously announced, and I quote, ‘*cute pianist, huh?*’ how do you feel about this, as the pianist in question, George?”

George spluttered for the right words, face heating up. He was sure she would’ve exaggerated with the use of ‘*famously announced*’. But still. He covered his face, the small crowd making some noise of interest.

“I mean,” George said through his hands. He laughed to his side. “He really said that, didn’t he? I mean. We’re, uh, friends, so it was just like, teasing.” he scoffed, murmuring with a smile, “God, he’s so annoying.”

“*Dream* is annoying?” she repeated, laughing slightly. She must’ve missed his tone.

“No, I mean,” George laughed. “He’s nice. He’s just. Yeah,” he laughed at the dumbness of his words. “He’s really, really cool.

Wise, George.

It caused the interviewer to laugh, “You think that he’s annoying, but also cool.”

“Trust me, miss, this is the best answer you’re gonna get,” Wilbur cut in, grinning widely. “If you asked him this two weeks ago you would’ve gotten a completely different answer.”

He eyebrows were raised, creating two small wrinkles on her forehead, “Alright, then. Do you agree that he’s annoying?”

Wilbur’s face paled, “No, god no! Only George can say that, if I said that’d I’d lose my job,” this caused the audience to laugh.

That interview had been.. Different. George didn’t know if he liked it. He didn’t want his personal life to be known. No matter how big or small of a fanbase he had-- he wanted to be private. He was a private person in general, let alone telling strangers things for more strangers to read about.

Worries sprung in his mind as he went over everything he had said. He hated it. He didn’t want

this, he didn't want his personality to be displayed as a marketing strategy. He didn't want his trauma to be seen as a '*dark backstory*' for people to repeat. That was his business. Not theirs. Not..

George rubbed his eyes. Fuck.

His mind flew back to John, about how, realistically, he should've mentioned him when the interviewer brought up a dating rumour between him and Dream. Because that was a thing, now. People thought him and Dream were... were together.

George opened his phone, opened his messages with John. Realistically, he should be letting him know that what these people were saying was incorrect, that John didn't have to worry. But.. he didn't want to see his reaction. Didn't want to think about John.

He thought back to being with Dream, in the grass. He wanted a distraction. How does he do that, though?

A distraction of performing? He guessed that was the answer. Performing. It had become easier. Getting up on stage, playing the same songs. Getting off, listening to Dream sing. Listen to Dream sing a slow song about him, pretend he didn't hear it. He rarely threw up on the tour bus anymore, as long as he was blasting music or playing some board game with someone else. It was a distraction. He was distracted.

Maybe he just needed to... end things.

Because that was what he had been wanting to do before they left. But, then lovelessness came crawling back to him. Pity for himself, pity for John. Fear for what exactly John would threaten to get George to stay.

For now, all he needed was to stay distracted. With.. with Dream. Focus on friendships in his life. Make sure nothing stupid happens.

Meetings with Caroline had become more regular, she clearly wanted them to trust her. George had mentioned how he hadn't enjoyed the second interview as much as the first, while Wilbur countered his comment with an exclamation of surprise.

"What?" he said, "no, that was way better."

"I.. I didn't like it," George said. "Just like, in my own opinion. I wanna talk about music, not myself."

Once he had worded it simply, it came out correct, understandable. Caroline nodded, "You know, you can't just avoid that. But, you can ask to skip questions, or choose not to speak."

George raised his eyebrows, "I can?"

She had nodded, and gone on about something more to do with how they had been playing. Interviews.

"What makes you enjoy those interviews, Wilbur?"

As normal, Wilbur provided lengthy, well worded, charismatic answers. The kind that Caroline would want. They talked for a few minutes, discussing how exactly they want the lighting, if their microphones have been okay. The tracklist. Boring things. She stopped, staring at George after she had wrapped up all of their updates for the week.

“George,” she said, “you can play the electric guitar, right?”

George nodded slowly. “Uh. Well, I mean, I’m OK, but..”

“He’s really good, don’t listen to him,” Wilbur cut in.

Caroline grinned, “Well. Dream actually thinks it would be a good idea-- and you don’t have to do this at all by the way, it’s totally up to you,” she adjusted her hair, “Dream thinks it would be a good idea if you joined his backing band for some songs. On the electric guitar.”

George blinked, trying to let that sink in. Playing. With Dream.

Dream wanted him to play with George, for him. Specifically, playing Dream’s music. He thought that George..

George looked up at her. Why had she laid that on him... then? Was that the reason for the entire meeting?

George tried to simplify his questions, landing on one, “So I’d still be doing... the music for *The Discs*.”

“Yes,” she nodded, leaning forward to hold George’s hand. Her tone was soft, as she said, “Hey. You’re aloud to say no.”

“No.. I,” George bit his lip, “I just. I dunno, I’d be doing double the work.”

“It’s only like three songs you’d have to do,” she smiled. George turned to the band. They all looked unreadable. Hopeful, maybe. It wasn’t that George *didn’t* want to, he just didn’t want to be performing *more*. It was already stressful enough as is.

“I’ll,” he nodded slowly, looking up at his manager, “I’ll think about it.”

“Thank you,” she smiled, leaning back, “Dream really, really appreciates it. You should talk to him about it rather than me, he’s the one who really wants it to happen. He’s also very insistent on that if you don’t want to, it’s fine. They can find someone else.”

George didn’t want them to find someone else. George wanted to be the one that Dream chose.

“I’ll think about it,” he repeated after a pause.

“So,” Dream said, stood awkwardly. They hadn’t spoken about this yet. George stared at him. “You don’t-- you don’t like, have to, or anything.”

“No, no, I want to!” George said, “I, I just. I dunno, performing is scary, and yours seems so much scarier.”

“You would make it less scary,” Dream said softly. George felt himself melt at it, feeling the honey of his words sweeten his tongue.

“I..” he couldn’t help but let the smile creep onto his cheeks, they were friendly now, after all, “I’m not sure. That’s all.” He paused, “it’s not.. It’s not because of you.”

Dream made a little *tut* noise with his tongue, expression unreadable. “I just.. Genuinely. Don’t do it if you don’t want too. I just, I wanna be able to spend more time with you. We only really see

each other after shows. If we were in the same band.. Well.”

“I’d still be in *The Discs*, though,” George confirmed, pressing on his words.

“Of course,” he said. “We’d just be.. Hanging out.”

George scoffed slightly, “If you want to *hang out* with me so bad, why not just ask Caroline to let us spend more time together.”

“I have,” Dream said, looking up at George. “This is me asking us to spend more time together.”

“Yeah, I know that, but,” George smiled at his dorky grin. “I mean, like, out of work.”

Dream rolled his eyes, looking up to the roof, a shadow falling under his sharp jawline. His adam’s apple peeked through it, getting in the light as well. George’s tongue went dry. Dream looked back down slightly, “I couldn’t.”

“Why?”

“Sapnap wouldn’t shut up about it,” Dream said dismissively. “I mean, we do need another electric guitarist. I can’t play on every song. It’d only be for like, maybe 10 minutes if you put all the songs you’d be doing together. It’d just be like, killing two birds with one stone.”

George sort of understood what he meant. He nodded slowly.

“Hey,” Dream said. “How about we go and practice. Just me, you, and the band. You’re probably better friends with Karl and Alex than I am, anyways.”

George looked at him, confused, “huh?”

“I mean,” he shrugged, laughing slightly. “I dunno. Maybe. You guys just seem like you get along easily.”

George thought of them, their loudness and explicit jokes. He nodded, smiling, “I do.”

Dream pulled his weight off the bus, standing up and grabbing George’s arm, just above his elbow. “Okay, let’s go find them, then.”

George had no choice but to let himself be dragged into the van, seeing them all lounging around on expensive sofas and playing on their phones. Dream pulled him in, “We’re gonna go to the studio and practice, and I don’t wanna hear one of you bitches complain!”

“What the *fuck*, we literally just--”

“Doesn’t matter, we have a potentially new part-time electric guitarist for our band,” Dream said. “And he wants to see if he likes it.”

George squinted his eyes playfully, “Did I say that?”

Dream stared at him, faltering. “I mean-- if he doesn’t want to, that’s--”

“No, he wants too.” George grinned. Dream nodded, and climbed into the drivers seat of the tour bus, patting the leather next to him for George to sit.

“Wait, you’re aloud to drive this like whenever?” George asked, slowly shuffling into the seats and falling in. “I mean, it’s not like I can drive.”

“Wait, you can’t drive?” Dream asked, avoiding George’s first question.

“No?” he smiled, scratching his chin. “Is.. Is that a problem?”

Dream grinned in return, “I mean, no, but, like. It’s just.. You’re old.”

Old. George almost saw himself as younger than Dream. George scoffed, “I’m only one year older than you.”

“Yeah, and I know how to drive,” Dream smirked, eyes twinkling. They heard mumbling from the back, the light rustle of clothing and lighthearted comments.

“Wait,” Dream turned, leaning into the back. “Do we have time for me to quickly give George a driving lesson?”

Sapnap stared up from his phone at him, “Are you *kidding me*.”

Dream grinned, leaning back into his seat, tapping the wheel. His smile was clear in his voice as he said, “Okay, okay!”

“Jesus christ,” Alex said to Karl. Dream turned back to them again, hair flopping over his forehead.

“So that’s a no then? You’re *sure* we don’t have time to--”

“We don’t,” Karl said. “And nobody wants to see that, either.”

“See what?” George grinned.

“You two going on a driving lesson date!” Sapnap exclaimed, laughing slightly. George flushed, slightly surprised. He had realised the implications of their sighs, but for them to genuinely think..

“Oh my *god*, Sapnap!” Dream said back, tone slightly joking. “He has a *boyfriend*.”

“Wait, he does?” Karl asked, leaning forward. George’s mouth hung open, side-eyeing Dream with a grin.

“I’ve actually told you guys!” A british poshness decorated his tone, the reminder of London shooting back to them. Alex mocked this, which made Dream roll his eyes, and lay his hand atop of George’s thigh, murmuring, “Don’t listen to them.”

George could tell it was intended to be a joke. He knew that. His heart had skipped a beat from the touch, though it was light, and fleeting, breath caught in his throat. It was probably from the lack of a sex life he had been having, George told himself. Though, his thoughts lingered on the way he could feel Dream’s warm breath on his neck, the low rumble of his tone. His rosary necklace dangle above George’s shoulder,

George looked down at his trousers, moving his own hand to press into the roll of his knees, pressing his thighs together, then letting the tension loosen. Calmed his breath. *This isn’t High School, idiot*. He glanced over to Dream, who seemed completely fine. Obviously. He stared out the window, trying to focus on some girl wandering down the street.

“She has nice hair,” he said, which made Dream full-on laugh. He turned his head to face him, “What?”

“Nothing,” Dream giggled.

George stared at him, as Dream fell into harsher laughter, avoiding George's eye. Curiosity tingled in the air. George wanted to be a part of the joke.

"What? Why are you laughing?" He pressed, smiling slightly. Dream just laughed more.

"Nothing-- it, it doesn't matter," he laughed, waving his hand dismissively. "Just reminded me of something, that's all."

George nodded slowly, slightly hurt. He wanted to know, but decided not to press on about it.

Or not.

"C'mon, let me know!" he exclaimed, staring up at Dream with big puppy doe eyes, as if that would work.

"No--"

"Can you two stop flirting and start driving?" Alex yelled from the back, which made them both go silent, and Dream slowly turn on the car, still snickering slightly from whatever was so funny about George commenting on some girl's hair.

"Yeah, yeah, whatever," Dream said, turning the keys and lighting the ignition. The car started to rumble, small buzzings of whatever was turned on. Dream messed with the gearstick, turning it into drive.

"This is *so nice*," George grinned as the vehicle started to roll, messing with the seats, rubbing his ass around in the chair. He pressed his hands underneath his legs, fingers upturned.

"I guess you'll never know why I was laughing," Dream smiled, which threw them into another back and forth of comments. Dream was, surprisingly, an alright driver. George's eyes lingered on the way his hands held the wheel, the way his fingers curled around the gearstick.

Jesus christ, maybe he did need to get laid.

"Oh my god," George said out of nowhere, "I miss my boyfriend."

Dream scoffed, looking through the rear-view mirror and turning. "Rude."

"I haven't had sex in *so long*," he groaned. "And I look good as well. So not fair."

Karl grinned, "Why are you telling us that, George?"

"Can't you just call him?" Dream muttered, tone harsh. He avoided George's gaze. George felt like he was in trouble. He wanted to say, '*what did I do? I thought we were being friends*,' but bit his tongue, realising how pathetic he would sound over some stupid tone.

"Sorry, I shouldn't have brought it up, that's weird," he pressed his eyebrows down to his eyes, hoping that clearly opening a change to conversation would work.

The car continued to buzz down the hill in around a minute of silence when Dream spoke again.

"You could just," Dream started, biting on the flesh of his bottom lip. "You could just cheat."

What?

"What?" George stared at him, suddenly wanting to stay on this topic. What the.. He looked at

Dream, offendedness clear on his face.

"I'm sorry, it's just like," he said, "he's in England. You could get away with it."

George blinked.

"*What?*" he repeated, "I wouldn't-- I wouldn't do that, Dream."

"Sorry," Dream bit his lip. "That was a joke. Sorry. I shouldn't have-- that was dumb."

"Yeah," George stared. "Yeah, it was."

Dream looked guilty. He looked hurt. But still-- fucking weird thing to say. Who suggests to their friend to cheat on their boyfriend? And pass it off as a joke.

"Yeah, I'm sorry," Dream said, "Really. That was so stupid. Fuck."

George looked at him, unsure of how to react. He didn't want another fight. They were past that. They had agreed, and George didn't want to break that agreement. Part of him screamed for his dignity, how he should be defending himself more, but again, he didn't want to fight. He didn't have the energy.

"It's okay," George sighed, staring up to Dream. He thought back to Dream's earlier movements, and ghosted his hand over Dream's thigh, before deciding against it, and pressing it on his lap. "Don't worry. I just-- I am loyal to him."

Dream nodded, "I'm sure."

He seemed sorry. George knew that he was. He guessed this would be how it worked, shifting to kindness. Let in apologies, try and be healthy. George had forgiven Dream more times that he could count, big or small, but nonetheless still would continue to. Again and again.

George's eyes fluttered to Dream. To his freckles, almond against tanned skin. His expression was of sorrow.

George caught himself. He didn't want to think like this again. Didn't want to obsess over every tiny movement Dream made, detangle the meaning behind his breaths, or the way he let his tongue lay against the roof of his mouth.

He seemed sad. Only slightly, but still.

George prayed for someone in the back to bring up some form of mindless banter. It happened, eventually. They began talking amongst themselves, and eventually, Dream cut in.

"No, that's so bad for your hair, what?" Some exclamation about the mindless conversation that had been going on in the backer end of the car. What mattered was he sounded okay. Of course he was.

"It's cheaper, though!"

"I could literally buy you a session with my hairdresser, and she's fucking good," Dream said. George had noticed that. He buys people's love. He remembered running over how he should've brought it up during their conversation in the evening grass, wondering if he'd ever get to have that conversation again. George made a note of it-- how he needs to bring it up.

"She?" George repeated, grinning. "How didn't I know you were bi?"

“I don’t know!” Dream laughed, shaking a strand of hair from his eyes. “That’s on you, not me. I am clearly not heterosexual.”

“Tell me about it,” George said, exasperated, which made Dream collide his hand with George’s upper arm, smacking him playfully.

“Shut up, idiot,” Dream laughed, tone endearing. They pulled into the new studio, bickering about ‘*how gay*’ each other are. At one point, George’s thigh brushed against Dream’s because of how close they had been arguing. For the rest of the ride, George became hyper aware of whether or not what part of their body was touching. Their friends in the back jumped off first, leaving Dream and George alone in the front of the tour bus. George could’ve cared less. He definitely didn’t sit, so still that he was statue-like, waiting for Dream to move. Dream jumped out carelessly, his shoulder brushing George’s as he jumped out.

It isn’t happening again, George repeated to himself, ignoring the way his breath caught. *It isn’t*.

George didn’t care for Dream’s touch. He didn’t at all.

He hopped off, the distance between the bus seats and the concrete floor causing ground shock to shoot up his legs. George looked up at Dream, stared at the way his skin was illuminated by the light from the afternoon sun. He smiled, opening his mouth to talk, but Dream turned, yelling to his band, “Did you get a guitar for George?”

“They have electric guitars here!” Karl called back, which made Dream click his tongue, nodding, and grabbing onto George’s arm, pulling him inside.

“Why do you pull me so much?” George groaned, pretending like he didn’t like it. He was pulled into a studio, much more expensive than the last. Instruments were laid or hung up around the room.

“What one do you want?” Dream said, gesturing to the electric guitars hung on the wall. George stared at them, lots of sharp edges, all well polished and multicoloured. George pointed at the least intimidating one.

Dream pulled it off the wall, muttering something about how, “Of course you’d choose the most boring one.” He held it in one hand, then, grabbed the back of George’s shirt, pulling him towards Dream’s chest. George felt the curve of his ass press into Dream’s thighs, and if he was still in the car, he was physically unable to move, then. He held his breath, trying to keep his hands from even quivering as Dream pulled the guitar over his chest, stapping it across George’s back. Dream’s breath was hot against his neck. George’s cheeks burned. Alex raised his eyebrows, smirking at George’s rattled expression. *Fuck you*, he wanted to say, but bit his tongue.

Dream stepped backwards slightly, no longer pressed up against George’s back. George didn’t let himself relax.

“Oh my god, you’re so tense,” Dream laughed, “chill out.”

George tried, but just ended up with his hands clinging to the instrument strapped to him awkwardly, entire body stiff. Dream let go for a second, letting George’s body untense as he hooked in the electric guitar to the amp. The wire brushed George’s calf.

George felt Dream come back, himself be spun around to face him, grinning slightly at his posture. George wished he was holding himself in a way that was smooth, but instead felt stupid looking with thin, short limbs, unsure of where to let them hang. Dream’s touch lingered on George’s

elbow, before he let go of him completely, George's body finally relaxing. George let out a breathe he hand been hyper aware of holding.

"OK," Dream said, smile prevalent in his voice. He leant against the wall behind him, crossing his arms. "Play something."

"What do I play?" George asked, knowing the answer that was going to be thrown back at him.

"Whatever you want," Dream grinned. His gaze was direct, unapologetic. It was terrifying.

"I.." George held the guitar awkwardly. "I'll.. I'll just play one from my band."

"You're putting so much pressure on him," Karl cut in, making George remember his request. George wondered if it had been related to this. "George, really, it's not a big deal. It doesn't matter."

George nodded, mouth dry. "Okay."

"Yeah-- sorry," Dream said, tone lighter. "Don't worry. Just play something."

George nodded slowly, deciding on a song titled '*No Room*' that him and Niki had written during university. George had written one line of it-- "*I wish I could say that we were two side characters in each other's stories, that you don't matter*", something based off a show he'd been watching at the time, though he now associated with his own life. The guitar was the centre of it, Niki had thought up some catchy group of chords, and encouraged George to play them, as he had just started learning. Singing it for Dream, George's voice was soft, quiet, but it was on tune. He hadn't sung in months. His voice quivered slightly, starting, but he slowly got into it. It was objectively less beautiful than *Liszt*, of course, but it was a good song. It had definitely changed over time, as when George wrote it, it had been happy, though years later, it sounded more bittersweet.

Dream smiled once he finished, "*You are good.*"

George laughed slightly, nodding. "Thanks."

"So, uh," Dream said, "If you do decide that you want to do it, you'd have to learn three songs. Because you'd only be performing three songs."

"I know," George said, grinning. "You've said."

Dream scoffed, turning to his band. "So, should we.. like... practice? Or give George the chords?"

Sapnap shrugged. "I mean, this is kinda unplanned."

Dream scoffed, grabbing a guitar with his right hand carelessly. He smiled, "Come on."

"What song are we playing?" Karl asked, turning to him and staring over his shoulder. Dream grinned, motioning for them to get up.

They played most of the songs from his new album, Dream singing in a much less harsh tone than when he's up in front of thousands, dancing and playing. Acoustic, Dream's music sounded... pretty. Nice. Almost vintage sounding, nearly stripped down rock n' roll. From this close, George could see the way that Dream's fingers curved and moved against the neck of the guitar, fast. The way they curved, jumping from chord to the next.

"What do we do after this?" Alex asked, after they had finished a song, "What, *Shattered*, right?"

The mention of the song caused Sapnap to give Dream a look, some warning. George definitely didn't want to be serenaded with that. He had gotten away with pretending not to hear the lyrics on shows, going into halls or bringing up conversations. He didn't want to think about it.

Dream's eyes met with George's for a split second before pulling away. Dream waved his hand dismissively, "skip it. Not the right mood."

They did.

They moved onto the next song, and George couldn't help but compare the experience to what happened with *The Discs*. With them, he had been a maybe. With them, he had been an unofficial member, only performing occasionally. And he'd ended up touring with them.

"So, uh," Dream said, "I mean, no pressure, but like, do you have an answer?"

George didn't know. Honestly. "I.. I don't. Sorry."

Dream nodded, looking at his feet. He repeated what George had heard more in the last 24 hours than in his entire life, "You're aloud to say no."

George smiled, "I know. I'm.. I'm genuinely not sure."

"Take your time," Dream said. George was sure it was a more urgent decision than what it was being made out to be on paper, by his feverish tone and constant asking for reminders. George didn't.. He didn't know.

He practically fell into his bed from the comfort of his own van, safe. Away from Dream's brawny, tanned hands, away from the graze of his shoulder, of his thigh. Of his back.

George ran his hands up to his face, hiding himself. He didn't know. He didn't know.

His own band had been distant about it, Wilbur having murmured something about how it would "realistically be the right decision." He couldn't tell if they wanted him to or not. He couldn't tell if they cared.

George thought back to how his breath had caught in his throat once Dream had pressed against him. Or in the car, when he touched his thigh. How he..

George shook his head at the thought. No. Of course he doesn't *like Dream*. That would be so stupid. Dream had hurt him multiple times. He was probably just confused, or tired.

What it the sprout of lust you feel when he lays his hand on your thigh, then? A deep part of his brain asked, George pressing it aside instantly.

Dream had been correct, though.

Shut up.

You can always let whatever you want happen. He wouldn't know.

I'm good. Shut up.

Are you?

George bit his tongue. He didn't.. He didn't like Dream. He missed him whenever he was gone,

and enjoyed his company, but those too things were completely platonic.

He wanted to cry. To Dream, but of course, he couldn't do that. To John, to run back to him. To Wilbur, but he was distant.

Just make the decision. Do it or don't, it wouldn't really make that much of a difference.

George thought of Dream's promise. Had this been what he had meant? Would this qualify? Would he be breaking trust, would he become a traitor?

George slapped his face with both hands lightly, wanting to cry, but nothing coming out.

Okay. He nodded slightly. He had needed a distraction. He'd do it. He didn't want to disappoint.

Coming to the conclusion didn't feel like that much of a relief, felt more of a sigh. He slipped under the covers, smiling at the prospect of Dream's reaction. How he would grin, jump in the air. Hold George close to him, within his big, muscular arms. George smiled. OK, maybe he did want to do it.

He decided to send it over text, a simple, lowercase, *I'll do it*.

Dream took seconds to respond, first with a series of exclamation points, then, sending a *YESS*. George grinned, covering his eye with his left hand. *He's such an idiot*.

George sent through, *sorry for texting u it. It's just easier*.

Dream typed for a second, before responding, *No dw! Im just glad that you're doing it OMG OMG!!*

He seemed excited. George grinned wide, letting the phone drop and holding it to his chest. He breathed deeply, trying to calm his endearment. He pulled the phone back up, texting a, *Go to sleep, idiot*.

After some tired consideration, he added a '<3' below it.

Chapter End Notes

as always, comments are very appreciated! love you all

Autumn

Chapter Notes

hii!! trying really hard to get over my writers block,, and im pretty sure now that this chapter is finished it wont come back because damnnn these next few chapters coming after are going to be LOADED. anyways enjoy lmao !!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream had ran to George the next morning, running to hug him. Wrap tanned, muscular arms around him and whisper how he was *so happy that he agreed*.

George hadn't understood why it was a big deal, but that didn't matter. All that mattered had been the fact that Dream had him in an embrace, whispering praises into his ear.

Okay, that sounded bad.

He didn't like Dream. That would be absolutely absurd. Even if it wasn't for the main factor as to why it would be wrong-- his lover, it would still be absurd.

Dream had consistently proven that he hurts George. Dream could barely apologise, Dream used people, and Dream was full, head to toe, of privilege. Everything he had had been handed to him on a silver platter. It wouldn't make sense for George to *'like him'*. That would make George the stupid one.

Questioning it didn't mean it was true. He kept pushing the blame onto not being with his boyfriend, or just pushing it away. Let it build up, topple over later.

Dream had been right. That practicing with their band caused them to spend more time together. More instances that left Alex with an eyebrow raised, an unspoken innuendo on his face.

George wasn't actually performing with them yet, he wouldn't until they reached Virginia. Despite this, learning the songs had taken up most of his time. Because they were difficult, something he hadn't been warned of.

He spent the rest of his time either sleeping, or playing chess with Dream. Which was what he happened to be doing one Thursday night, winning, as always.

"How are you *so bad*?" George exclaimed, after winning yet another round. "I just... I don't get it."

"We've literally had this conversation before!" Dream laughed back, "You're just weirdly good. I could destroy your ass at *anything else*."

George raised his eyebrow, "Anything?"

"Yup," Dream said, laying backwards in his chair. "I bet you, George Henry Davidson, that I'd be better than you at *anything* that isn't chess."

George smirked, "that's not true."

“It’s not,” Dream agreed under his breath, “but still. Name one thing that isn’t chess, and I’m probably better than you at it.”

George paused, tapping the table. He looked up. “Speed chess.”

“No, that’s stupid,” Dream immediately shot back. George laughed.

“Uh,” he said, then laughed. “Cock.... No.”

“What?” Dream’s eyes widened, pink spilling onto his cheeks. “Cock *what*?”

George laughed, flushing hard and covering his face. “Nothing, nothing!”

“Cock *what*?” Dream had exclaimed louder, face fully shocked.

Something that he’d learnt about Dream is that he’s kind of a dork. Even when he’d hated him, he’d seen him as something effortlessly charismatic. Knowing him better, he was an absolute dumbarse. His laugh would shift into a wheeze at the stupidest of times, eyes crinkling up at the edges. He wasn’t afraid of embarrassing himself, whereas George.. Was.

George, even hating him, had seen him as perfect. But he wasn’t. He was human.

The realisation was terrifying.

Dream could love. Dream could laugh, and befriend others, and have a favourite TV show. The things that made someone loveable applied to Dream. Excuses were slipping through George’s fingers like sand.

Another thing spending time with the band had taught George was that boredom is worse than sadness, or fear, or anger. Because at least then you’re feeling, instead of waiting.

Befriending Dream, George learnt that he could be lyrics to a song that was loud, angry, unapologetic, or a volume of old poetry, metaphors of fairies on vibrant mushrooms. George didn’t know which one he preferred. He was both Summer and Winter, and when he spoke to George, he would flourish into a tender Autumn.

The only problem was, every Autumn ends in naked trees, shriveled leaves, and rain. It didn’t matter if Dream’s Winters were beautiful, that just created expectations for something that George knew would never be good. So for now, he was Autumn, trying to pretend he didn’t already know what was coming next.

But the most interesting thing that he had learnt, whilst studying over guitar notes, strumming until perfection, was that Sapnap knew something. Something George didn’t. And it was eating him up inside.

“So,” he had said, whilst they were alone. “Do you like the album?”

George paused, tapping the guitar that was laid in front of him. “I mean... yeah. I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t.”

Sapnap nodded slowly. “Are there any songs that... stood out to you? At all?”

Shattered.

“I mean,” George stopped, “Like, *The Trail* is really catchy. I-- I like all of them, I guess.”

Sapnap had nodded slowly.

“..Why?” George asked, hair fallen slightly over his face.

“No reason,” he had said.

Dream also had little things he would like to fidget with, one of them having been his own hands. George tried, so, so hard not to focus on it. To ignore the way his mouth grew dry, his own hands beginning to shake.

During one particular practice, Dream had came in, complaining about how their bus had ran out of milk and butter.

“It’s like, what can you have without those things?” he exclaimed. “Nothing! What if I wanna take up baking?”

“Go and buy some, then,” Sapnap said, uncaring.

“No,” Dream responded instantly, laying his guitar down on the couch. “I’m *working*.”

“On what?” George asked, pressing his eyebrows together.

“New music,” Dream responded instantly. George laughed lightly, confused. He’d thought that Dream had said that he had little motivation for music.

George had ended being voted off to do groceries with Alex, as they had been the two who had been working the hardest, and deserved a break. George had learnt that Alex was, to little surprise, a shit driver. He also smoked, in or out of a car. It reminded George of a younger Dream.

“Oh my *fucking God*, you’re going to crash,” George exclaimed, as Alex swerved harshly, laughing wildly. “You’re going to *kill us!*”

“Don’t have to work if we’re fucking dead!” Alex yelled back, as if neither of them enjoyed their job. Maybe it was an attempt to seem punk. They arrived at the grocery store, stumbling out and smelling of cigarettes, Alex’s dark, ragged appearance looking perfectly out of place.

They wandered in, talking to each other about how great it is to have a break. George had been unaware of how badly he had been ingulfed in memorising chords.

“So,” Alex had said, grabbing a carton of milk. “You and Dream have been getting along pretty well.”

George groaned, sliding the door to the dairy products shut. “Yeah. We have. There’s nothing weird about getting along with someone.”

Alex raised an eyebrow, “there’s not? Because you guys seem to *really* like each other.”

George chose not to show any reaction on his face, saying, “what gave you that impression?”

“Uh, you like, forget how to move whenever he touches you,” he pressed. George sucked on the skin on the inside of his mouth. “Look, I’m just saying--”

“I thought you didn’t want to talk about this with me,” George groaned, hating the way Alex could already read him, though they just met.

“Look,” Alex said, “I didn’t. But if you’re gonna act how you’re acting right now, *somebody* has to

bring it up.”

“I don’t even know what you’re talking about,” George said, acting all-mighty.

“It’s just,” Alex shrugged, “I dunno. If I were you guys, I would’ve fucked each other by now.”

George glared at him. “I have a *boyfriend*.”

“Yeah, but do you?” Alex squinted at him. “Like, who are you thinking about more? Dream or.. That guy? Whatever his name is.”

“John,” George said through clenched teeth. “And-- that’s like a completely different situation. I’m *working* with Dream. Of course I’m gonna be more involved with him.”

Alex scoffed, stopping the roll of the shopping cart to stare at George. “Look, man. I’m just saying.”

“Yeah, and you’re wrong,” George replied instantly, pushing the cart further. “Do you think you guys need anything else?”

“Wow, changing the subject?” Alex grinned. George wasn’t, it had been a genuine question, but he bit his tongue.

“What, do you like anybody?” George said, “maybe we should talk abo--”

“You literally just implied that you like Dream, oh my god,” Alex groaned. “You have such a fat crush that it’s annoying. You cannot tell me, honestly, that you haven’t even at least questioned if you like him or not.”

He had. He really had.

Of course, he couldn’t tell him that.

“No, I actually haven’t, so,” George tried, eyes catching on a chocolate bar, glaring at him. “I’m getting this.”

While he had wandered over, he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned, ready to argue further at Alex, deny all feelings, but was met with two complete strangers. They were in their mid-teens, smiles growing on their faces.

“Um, hi,” one of them giggled. “Sorry if your busy, but, uh, are you that guy from that *Tiktok*?”

George blinked slowly.

He had no idea that he would ever have reached the point where he would get recognised in public.

“Um,” George stood awkwardly, smile growing on his face to seem less cold, “Yeah, uh, hi.”

“Could we.. sorry, if it ‘s okay, could we get a photo?” the one on the right asked, seeming.. Excited. George was in shock.

“Uh,” he turned to Alex, who seemed much less surprised. “I mean-- yeah, sure. Alex, do you wanna..?”

“Yeah, yeah, course,” he said, and was handed one of their phones. They moved to him, George posing awkwardly. They retrieved the phone, giggling their thanks and whispering to each other

excitedly. They skipped away quickly, looking back to get more glances.

“Oh my god, I have fans,” George whispered to Alex, who laughed.

“If you’re gonna be hanging around Dream in public, you need to get used to that,” Alex laughed, staring at the chocolate that George had picked out, and throwing it into the cart. “But that isn’t going to get me to change the subject, bitch.”

“Oh no,” George heaved, dramatism lining his words.

“You’re in love,” Alex pressed. “And, on a serious note, you should break up with your boyfriend.”

George spun his head around. “*What.*”

“You clearly aren’t interested him, you only bring him up when you’re defending yourself for liking another guy,” Alex said, tone casual.

George shook his head, “I can’t just-- I can’t break up with someone over the phone. That’s horrible. Also, *no.*”

“Look, that’s up to you,” Alex said. “I don’t wanna-- cause I don’t know the full story, or anything. But from the vibes I’ve been getting, you don’t like him.”

George didn’t like being seen through. He wanted to be someone who had secrets, who did anything but have his heart on his sleeve. Currently, he was being read like a book. He was disappointed in himself for letting himself slip. Back in London, nobody could guess his thoughts. Nobody knew his reasonings, knew his mistakes. It was comforting. He wanted that back.

George had scoffed, denying all feelings insistently and trying to make sure everything was only a joke. Their total had been a small number for how long they had taken, bickering in the aisles.

“Isn’t that crazy how those people came up to talk to me, though?” George asked, as they hopped into the car, Alex starting the engine. “Like, they knew who I was, and I didn’t know them. That’s weird.”

“If you ever went out to a place like this with Dream, it wouldn’t be two girls, it would be a whole ass meet-and-greet.” Alex said, breaking the cap to the lid of his drink and letting it fizz lightly.

“Yeah, but that’s *Dream*,” George pressed. “I’m not.”

Alex shrugged, “fame is fame. You can’t escape it.”

It was said casually, but it hit George, the truth behind his words chilling.

George had turned up for practice, as he would any other day, and found the room littered with groupies. It wasn’t something he hadn’t seen before, they tended to hang around them, but there was one thing that was different this time. And it was the fact that Dream had some *boy* on his lap, giggling to him.

Who the fuck was he?

Jealousy crept into George’s veins, a dark venom that he would always manage to poison himself with. Well, not *jealousy*, but surely, surely Dream was better than this. Better than to have a random stranger on his lap. How could George befriend him if he would let random people act

around him like that?

George didn't know why, but he had completely crossed out the entire concept of Dream having any love interest from his mind. It seemed... impossible.

And it was more annoying, the fact that it was a boy. George didn't know why. He just would feel more comfortable complaining about a girl on his lap than someone who mirrored his own sexuality.

"Oh my *god*, shut up," Dream laughed at him, fucking laughed, stopping only when his eyes locked with George's. He was letting some boy sit on his lap, wriggle around and bat his eyelashes, twirling Dream's hair between his fingers and Dream was *going along with it*? Surely, Dream was better than that.

The boy looked at George too. And then, George knew that he would have to scare this guy off if it was the last thing he could do. Show he knew him better.

"Hi," he, tone and gaze icy, glaring daggers at them both. He clutched his guitar angrily.

"Hi," the boy said. He was pretty. George was prettier.

George sat down, cross legged. Step one, he needed to show backstory.

"I hope that milk I got for you was the right kind, by the way," George said to Dream, passive aggression clear.

"The milk?" Dream asked, furrowing his eyebrows and smiling. "How can you get a type of *milk* wrong?"

"I don't know," George smiled lightly. The boy looked annoyed. Good. Step two, Keep going. "You know, I found a new chess board in Wilbur's bag, it's way better than the one we normally use. We could play on it later, if you're good enough?"

Dream smirked, rolling his eyes. "Okay, I mean, maybe."

"You play chess?" the boy asked, faltering. "What, are you like, the smart one?"

"I mean, I graduated with a computer science degree early, so I guess that could make me smart," he said, saltiness dripping from his tone. Step three, don't be scared to be seen as a bitch. "And that's in England, by the way, where our tests aren't numbered. *Clay* would know, he went to my school for a year."

Everyone in the band looked shocked at George's sudden outburst, and Dream was clearly trying to hold back a grin.

"Oh, so you think that because you're smart you're better than everyone?" the boy asked, clearly trying his hardest.

"Not everyone," George said sweetly, "just you."

Alex laughed to clear the tension, but George knew from the boy's expression alone that he'd won. He could stay on Dream's lap for as long as he wanted, but he would know that George *knew* Dream. He would know that George is better than him.

It took around a minute for him to leave. George felt victorious.

Dream, though, immediately erupted with laughter.

“Oh my *god!*” he exclaimed, shaking his head, “I had no idea that you could be that salty, oh my god, that was so funny.”

George raised his eyebrows, “I literally acted like that with you for like-- nearly a month. Actually, no, a month.”

“Yeah, it’s just funny,” Dream grinned, shaking his head. “What got you so jealous, oh my *god!*”

“Yeah,” Sapnap nodded, “Like, I thought that *Dream* was a jealous person. You’re like, another level.”

“I wasn’t *jealous*,” George said, “it’s just like-- I wanted to talk to you, and he was in the way.”

“That’s like, the definition of jealousy,” Dream smirked. George glared at him.

“What did you say, *‘I know I’m better than you’?*” Karl laughed, “That’s *gold*. That-- that’s so funny. Also, yeah, you were one hundred percent jealous of that twink.”

“Okay,” George rolled his eyes, “you’d act like that but worse if anyone got on *Sapnap*’s lap.”

This caused Dream to laugh even harder, banging the side of the seat he was sat on. Something deep from George’s stomach fluttered, about how he’d made Dream laugh. Both Sapnap and Karl went pink. Alex exclaimed something about how he was ‘unhinged’ that day.

The performance that had happened that night had also been interesting because of how.. Distant he had seemed from *The Discs*. Yes, they had been sleeping in the same bus, but they hadn’t really been speaking in more than casual conversations. He felt like he hadn’t seen them in weeks when he caught sight of them, feeling as though he should be wishing them some sort of message about how he had missed them.

As they moved from venue to venue, across the foreign roads of America, Dream felt.. Distant. Something was off. He would laugh, hollow, and one of his performances had been, well, not *bad*, but his energy was clearly down.

George had stopped him, grabbing him by the shirt so that he turned around. “Hey,” George’s voice was soft, “are you okay? Is something up?”

Dream’s face softened, “was it really that bad?”

“No!” George exclaimed, shaking his head, “No, no! You just seem.. Sad.”

Dream furrowed his eyebrows, expression unreadable.

“Is..” George fumbled for the right words, “is there anything that I could do? You... you can talk to me, if you--”

“I’m fine,” Dream said. “Don’t... really. I’m just pretty tired.”

George smiled softly, leaning against the door next to him. “Go to sleep, then. You’ve been working really hard. You deserve it.”

Dream smiled slowly, grinning. He leant back, murmuring, “I need a fucking cigarette.”

"I thought you didn't smoke," George said, tone light.

"I don't," he said cheekily.

"Why is it that everybody I know smokes suddenly?" George asked.

"You don't like it, right?"

"I don't," George shook his head. When he had mentioned it to Dream, he couldn't remember.

The reasons why he didn't like smoking were languid, but they bottled down to his father. Most of his childhood had been spent with the smell of cigarettes filling his living room, and all of his dad's clothes. And with his dad, came bad memories.

"Hey," Dream said, "you know that guy.. He didn't matter, or anything. Don't worry."

"Why would I worry?" George asked, pretending as though it hadn't been comforting. He needed to hide, again. Dream's face fell at his words.

"Sorry. Yeah, right," he had said, nodding slowly. He turned to the nearest door, "I need to smoke."

During the next boring Saturday morning, as George laid around in socks, small, jean shorts and a knitted sweater, Dream had wandered into his bus.

"Hi," George said, smile creeping onto his face. "What are you doing here?"

"I, uh," Dream laughed slightly. His overall demeanour seemed off, the usual brightness in his tone blank. As it had been the last night. "I have a surprise for you."

George raised an eyebrow, grinning. "Oh? For me?"

Dream didn't smile back. He laughed, hollow. "Yeah, it's actually behind this door."

"Wait, *now*?" Wilbur cut in, mid way through drinking his tea. Dream nodded slowly.

"You know about this?" George turned to Wilbur, who seemed to be wanting to ask Dream some questions about why this surprise had been here now.

"Wait, *that* surprise?" Tommy exclaimed from the other end of the bus, which made George's smile only grow.

"What is this?" George squinted his eyes at Dream, trying to read into any body language for clues, getting nothing.

George stood up slowly, sliding his phone into his seat and taking measured steps towards the door, throwing confused glances at Dream. *A surprise?* He, genuinely, had no clue what could be behind the door. Curiosity crept along his skin, tingling in excitement. His hand reached the handle, and with a swift turn, he pulled it open.

There was no decorations. No balloons. No cheers of some celebration that didn't make sense for that day. But what was their caught George's attention in an instant.

The person he least expected to see. Someone he had comforted himself saying, he's gone. He's distant. He's not there.

But there he was.

George's excited smile faded as in instant, as a million questions began to flicker through his mind.

He exhaled, tone breathy, "John."

Chapter End Notes

as always, comments are appreciated :] <3

Not even two days

Chapter Notes

hi!! before you read this, it needs to be said this chapter needs a trigger warning for discussion of non consensual touching, and the aftermath of it, while also having a brief description of how it felt. if that could potentially trigger you, please, PLEASE dont feel like you have to read this chapter, just skip to the chapter note at the end and there will be a summary.
if those things don't trigger you, have fun lol ;)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

John stood for a second, George having the chance to take in his features, the way he'd shaven, grown out his hair slightly. George felt his heartbeat stop.

What the fuck was he doing here?

They both faltered, before moving to hug each other concurrently, John slightly further down because of the steps. John's big arms wrapped around him, light brown hair pressing against George's cheek. George, even through shock, hated it. John pulled his face back from George's, awkwardly hopping up to the top step, chuckling, and connecting their lips. The kiss was sweet, softer than George had remembered them to be. John's lips tasted of cheap chapstick. It felt wrong, as always, but George had learnt to pretend.

John pulled back, smiling tenderly. George caught Dream's eye from in the bus, who looked extremely uncomfortable, staring at the floor. George felt the exact same way.

George felt like he had been caught. Like John was some embarrassing, dirty secret that had to be kept away from him, though he had flaunted him around when he wasn't there.

"What—" George started, furrowing his brows, laughing in confusion and rattledness. He didn't want John to be here. He had invaded *their* space, this wasn't for him. This wasn't. "What— how did you get here?"

"On a plane," John said obviously, laughing at his own words. "No, Dream invited me, actually. I have two days in America, just you and me."

Oh no. Oh fuck no.

George nodded slowly, as John pushed past him, into George's bus happily. Like the last time they had seen each other hadn't been John falling to his knees and sobbing, begging him not to do what George had committed to. But, there he stood, as though he was completely unfazed.

He really was an actor.

George didn't want to look at Dream. Two worlds had collided, two worlds from galaxies so far away, that to each other, they were only rumours to exist.

"Oh wow, this is better than our apartment!" John exclaimed jokingly, though it was true. "Where do you sleep?"

George walked down the bus, pointing at his tiny bed. Dream would've made some dumb innuendo about how it wouldn't be big enough for them both, but all John did was nod respectfully.

"Oh my god, I'm so excited," John exclaimed. "We're in *America*, babe! Living the dream!"

Dream scoffed slightly, biting back a comment. George's eye's flew back to him, a small acknowledgement. Almost an apology. Now, they couldn't giggle to each other like they were the only two people in the room.

Dream had invited him.

Why the fuck had Dream invited him? It had been going so well. So, so well. This wouldn't be good for either of them, how couldn't he see that.

"So," John said, to *Dream*. Of course he chose to spoke to him. George's skin crawled at the thought that they had already spoken, that Dream had picked him up from the airport. "What do we do?"

"Um," George cut in, eyeing Dream. "Wait, so, when did you fly in?"

"This morning," John said.

"You said," George started, staring between his two worlds. His two lovers from different times. One boring, pitiful, broken, and the other loud, untouchable, self-absorbed. "You said that Dream invited you. How did, how did that—"

"Ah," Dream laughed slightly, speaking up. His tone sounded different. George wondered if that had been the reason why he had been so off. "I mean, you were talking about him a lot, so. Y'know. Just thought it'd be a nice thing to do."

Liar. George thought. We were supposed to be honest with each other, what happened to that? Ridicule him, don't hold back for my dignity. I've lost it all, anyway.

"Yeah," Wilbur cut in. "He asked me, a lot. Like... last week-ish?"

"When I asked you and Alex to go and get the *milk*," Dream said, laughing slightly. It was nice. "That was *completely* a set up."

"Oh," George said, thinking back to it. *Why would you do that to me? Liar. We could've spent time together but you used it to plan for something that would bring us apart.* "Did.. Alex know?"

"Who's Alex?" John cut in. He seemed left out. A part of George felt happy about it. An unspoken brag of how much his life had changed for the better.

"You'll meet him," Dream said coldly, not looking him in the eye.

George didn't want him too. Because Alex wouldn't hold back. Alex didn't take bullshit, he said this flat out, as they were.

John nodded, smiling. "Can't wait."

Fuck you. Stay away from my life. Get out of my life.

George's mind flew back to before this, before America. He had been planning to break up with him.

He knew what Alex would nag him about.

For the day, at least, though, John gave George no alone time with anybody, not even John himself. Maybe it was trying to savour every moment, but George felt as though he was being shown off. Hung on a string, John saying, "Look at this, it's mine," and everyone cheering with envy.

So when Alex did meet him, George could tell that he clearly wanted to talk to George about it in private, but John chose to just stay, arm wrapped around George. He would every now and then kiss George's cheek, or his *lips*, and George felt sick. He felt as though every touch of John's was full of dirt, and it was rubbing off on him. That he would never be able to erase his dirty fingerprints.

"What do you all do?" John had asked.

"Practice, mostly," Sapnap said. "Because George is joining to help with some songs in the band, you know."

He hadn't known. He most definitely hadn't known.

George had barely kept him updated on anything. A good lover would've. A good lover would be better than him.

"Well," Dream cut in. "We do other things. Chess, you know."

"Oh, I bet you hate that," John said to George, nudging him with his shoulder, in an attempt to seem like he could read George. Like he knew his interests. George hated it.

"What?" Dream asked, furrowing his brows.

"Oh, it just doesn't really seem like Georgie's type of thing," John said. *Georgie*.

"I mean, no, it really is," Dream cut in, smile growing on his face. "He's like, the best out of us. Way better than I am."

George was embarrassed for John. He was pretty sure the rest of the room was, as well. The little holes in their so called perfect relationship were showing, the flaws that even they pushed to the side.

John nodded slowly. "Oh, right. I—, ah, that's, that's cool. I, I don't know why I thought you wouldn't be.. Sorry, that was really dumb."

George had never seen them so low energy. Normally they were welcoming to everyone, always full of laughter and kind gestures. With John, even they couldn't get through his lack of charisma.

They all had left, off to go be shown something by Sapnap, John making the most about the one interesting thing about him, the fact he wasn't American.

It left Dream and George, together.

Alone.

George looked at Dream. It had been the first time they had been alone in only hours, but it felt like days. George had missed him, while they had been together nearly the entire time.

He felt embarrassed. John wasn't exactly a trophy to show off.

“So,” George said slowly. “That’s the boyfriend I’ve mentioned a couple of times.”

Dream stared at his feet, nodding slowly. “It is. It is...”

George looked up at him. “Do you like him?”

George had changed his mind. He needed Dream to lie. He needed some sort of reminder that his boyfriend was worth anything. That George could maybe, in some world, love him.

“Yeah,” Dream said. He didn’t say it like it was the truth. “He’s.. he’s nice.”

George had remembered him wearing his heart on his sleeve, where had that gone?

It was selfish, but George almost hoped that Dream was hurt by his arrival. He hoped that Dream was jealous. He hoped that Dream’s heart broke a tiny bit every time he saw them together. So *someone else* thought it was bad.

“I guess... meeting him,” Dream looked against the wall, elbow held to the wood frame. “It just made him real.”

George didn’t know what he meant, “I... I don’t understand.”

“This,” Dream looked at George, “ *this*. I don’t want.. I don’t know. Him.. touching you. It feels wrong. I can see the way that you’re uncomfortable with it.” He paused, scoffing. “Or maybe I just want to. I don’t know. You said.. You said you needed a distraction,” his tone was small, “maybe you need it to end.”

“Not.. good,” he laughed slightly. “I dunno, I..” The confession laid in George’s tongue, untempered. “He.. he loves me. I know that. But.. but I don’t think I love him.”

Dream nodded slowly. “Okay.”

“And I feel like the villain— I mean, I am the villain, and it sucks. You always assume you’re going to be the one in the right, so realising I hurt him was just..”

Dream stared at him. George inhaled. Fuck, no going back.

“And, uh,” he didn’t want to admit it. “Don’t.. tell anyone, like, it’s not that bad, I just..” he inhaled slightly, “he liked me a lot. So he would.. touch me. And stuff. When I didn’t want him too. And only when I’ve arrived here have I really realised that was bad.”

Dream’s gaze softened, “George..”

“But the thing is— I hurt him,” he said, “I was the one who broke his heart. Normally relationships like that are black and white, so I don’t wanna say anything bad about him or else they won’t listen to his struggles as well. And when people talk about how hard it would’ve been for him.. it feels like..” George tapped the seat, laughing nervously, “I dunno.”

He squeezed his eyes shut, scared of Dream’s reaction. He was supposed to be hiding. Why the fuck had he said that, *how* could he let him know?

Eyes closed, he felt two arms move to wrap around his heart, through the barriers of George’s tensed muscles.

Dream was hugging him.

George, slowly, let himself relax, moving his small arms to caress Dream's back as well.

It was slightly awkward, at first. Dream's arm's around George's shoulders, both seated. Until George pressed the crook of his nose into Dream's neck, until Dream's head fell further into George's hair, and pulled him closer.

George knew it wasn't, but it felt like a kiss that he had been too scared to go through with.

George held him tight.

No words were spoken. They didn't need to be.

In the back of George's mind, he knew that friends wouldn't hold each other in an embrace like this. Every space of their bodies touching, listening to the sound of each other's heartbeat to guide their breaths to a slow.

The first time John and George had been alone together in America, really, really, alone, where they could be honest with each other, was at the dinner John had planned for him and George to go to. Some overly posh restaurant, with overpriced wines and european platters. John had booked out a private room.

The start of the dinner, itself, had been nothing more than awkward. George had been so used to easy, natural chemistry, he had forgotten how hard it was with John.

"Hows," George started, looking up at John. "How's London?"

John clicked his tongue, nodding. "It's good. It's good."

George nodded as well. "That's good." He glanced at the menu, skimming through the 5-star entrées as an excuse to stay silent. He was about to announce which one had caught his interest.

They got through appetizers with small talk, comments about the weather, and questions of the tour.

"What's performing like?" John asked.

"You wouldn't like it." George said dismissively.

"I wouldn't?"

"No," George responded.

"Do you like it?"

"Yes."

"Cool."

"Yeah."

If George had hated John's pretending, hated his fake smiles and the way that he showed George off as though he was a prize he knew he had little time before someone else were to win, there was no words as to describe how much he hated this.

It wasn't until they had their mains arrive, the waitress closing the door behind her, after George

had swallowed a mouth-full of beef, saying “this is so good,” that John decided to finally speak.

“Look,” John’s tone was careful, slow. “I um, I didn’t actually come here to just have sex and be cute. To America, I mean. There’s something I want to talk about, and, uh, we need to do this in person.”

George nodded languidly, keeping his mouth closed. He hoped, *prayed*, that John wouldn’t be talking about what was implied. Anything, anything but that.

“Look, George,” he said, “this is super hard for me to say. But we... Fuck, we need to break up.”

It hit George in multiple waves. *Break up. Over. It’s over.* He felt a lump grow in his throat, his voice trembling as he let out a small, “*what?*”

“Don’t talk to me like that,” John said, cutting him down harshly. “George... Do you have any clue how much you’ve hurt me? You’ve ruined my life. I can’t go anywhere, I can’t do anything, all I do is miss you. Because you killed me, alright? We might just be breaking up now, but you broke my heart months ago. You’re *horrible*.”

It was said so casually, so honestly, that it hit harder than any scream or yell of anger. He meant it.

It’s hard to admit that you’ve been the villain in someone else’s story, the realisation hitting George. He had been the villain. *Fuck*.

“..Okay,” was all George could say, without wailing, letting the tears spill over, humiliating himself.

John stared at him in shock. “ ‘Okay’? ‘*Okay*’?! ” His tone grew louder, more aggressive. “God—you don’t even give a shit! You don’t! I can’t believe that I genuinely thought that you loved me. You don’t even give a shit— and you’ve fucked him, haven’t you?”

“Him?” George repeated, words weak.

“Oh don’t play fucking dumb with me, I’m done with this, I’m done with *you!*” He exclaimed loudly, throwing his hands up in the air as a form of exasperation, cutlery clinking. “Dream! You’ve fucked him. I see the way you two look at each other, I’m not stupid. Good for you, really, about time you kiss someone you actually *fucking* like!”

“I don’t..” George’s word’s died in his throat, as he let the tears bubble over pathetically. John looked at him like he was disgusting. “You can’t... you’re leaving me? At.. *here?* ”

John had booked out a restaurant, gotten George in his best suit just for the real surprise to be a confession of the need for separation.

Of course he would do it like this.

John’s jaw dropped, and for a second George thought he was going to get hit. Then John started laughing. Raw, angry, shocked laughter. “You — ” he cut himself off, laughing harsher. “You cannot be serious, now you’re gonna bring out the waterworks and what, suck my dick and pretend to love me? You’re... how the fuck am I in love with you if you’re *this* pathetic?”

“You’re the only person who’s ever liked me,” George blabbed, tears streaming down his cheeks. “For me. You’re.. You’re the only proof I have that I’m worth *anything*. Please, p-please...”

“Well that doesn’t mean you love me, that means you’ve *used* me,” John said slowly, estranged

look in his eyes. “Look. I know sometimes I would touch you without asking, and I’m sorry for that. Genuinely. That.. that was pretty shit of me.”

“Then you don’t care either!” George exclaimed loudly, the first time he had raised his voice. “You just want to be the one in the wrong, when you... when you would..” He hiccuped slightly, wiping his eyes. “Everytime I think about you touching me, I feel like I’m going to be sick. And I thought that *I* was the one in the wrong for it. I could.. I could put you in jail, but you only care that I don’t love you back. How am I the pathetic one?”

John’s face fell, words clearly failing himself. George tried, tried so hard not to bathe in the victory of letting his words out clearly, and John hearing them. His expression, he *had* to be guilty. George hoped he was at least guilty.

“I...” John started, “that’s not...” he swallowed harshly. “Look, we both messed up. Can we just agree on that?”

George didn’t know what to say. He didn’t want to loose him. He hated loosing people. He wanted the comfort of his existence, while he’s just temporarily absent forever. Not him being gone. Not George being hated.

“But..” it was selfish. It was so selfish. “You *love me*.”

John glared at him. Not in the way that Dream used to, flirtatious and intimidating, and not in the way that Alex does, lighthearted and sarcastic. No, the way that John looked at him was full of nothing but pure hatred. Anger, dark, pooling. “George,” his voice quivered with anger. “Do you know what those fucking plans were that I wouldn’t shut up about? For our anniversary? Do you remember that?”

It felt so long ago, so distant, but hazed memories of planning came back to George. He nodded slightly.

“I was going to fucking propose to you!” John yelled, so loud that George wondered if the entire restaurant heard it echo. John fell into a shocked laughter. “I wanted to get married, that’s what. And you left. To go.. To go to *Dream*. If that’s not some sort of fucked sign from the universe that you didn’t, and never loved me, then I don’t know what is.”

George could feel his heartbeat pulse in his ears. “..*Propose?*”

John took a breath, deep and long. He looked, beyond all of the anger, behind all of the glares, sad. George had broken him. He wanted a long term commitment, not a passing of time.

“Yeah,” he said, voice harsh, but broken. “It’s fucking stupid, I know.”

His voice broke on the last syllable, turning his face away from George’s, so that he couldn’t see. It’s not like George hadn’t seen him cry.

John stood up from his table, glancing down at George. He went to the door, he went to it like he was the one in the right. Like he was the victim, like he deserved the last word.

“I’ll pay the bill,” was all that was said, as he left a half eaten duck on a gold lined plate, and a boy sobbing over a love that he was never committed to.

The first time John and George had been alone together in America, really, really, alone, where they could be honest with each other, was the last time.

George landed down against the seat, shaking. Navy blue sky fell over his world like a blanket. He felt as though his mind had been drawn from his body, he was just watching himself move through an old television. He felt nothing, and then again, everything. He felt good, like a weight had left his shoulders, and like he wanted to scream, scream until his voice no longer could let out anything other than a low croak. So he no longer had to speak.

He'd thought it wouldn't hurt.

He'd thought it'd feel good.

In his left hand, he held a can of *Coca-Cola* loosely, the red of the metal illuminated from the yellow light from the inside.

He had been so naive.

He cracked the bottle open, it sizzling softly as the confined air released into the atmosphere.

Two years. 28 months. Wasted. For absolutely nothing.

He was so stupid. George had been so stupid.

He could never get that time back. It was gone. Nights and nights of hope and fear, that never got resolved.

Some things are just created to end.

It had only taken one day. Now John would have to spend his time alone, in some unknown, less romantic state in America, crying over the one interesting thing that happened to him.

He held Dream's jacket to his chest, the warmth comforting. Now, there was nobody to love him. The one person who had was gone.

Because he had been with him as a passing of time, never thinking about the consequences of what could happen at the inevitable end. He never got with him.

Marriage. John had wanted marriage. He wanted suits, flowers and vows. He wanted a white picket fence, rows of children and George's love. He was so... traditional. So ready for something George hadn't even considered.

George had never heard him curse like that. How he had. Never thought that he was capable of hate.

He glanced down at his hand, at his ring finger. Pictured a golden strand of a ring, pictured John, on one knee, at an old park in London, telling him that he wanted them to be forever.

God, he thought, I need a drink.

Chapter End Notes

summary—

john is in america. john kisses george, and is overall romantic around him in front of dream + feral crew. its revealed that dream invited john to come to america for two

days. john gives george no time for alone time with anyone. george finally gets alone time with dream, whos upset. george is open with him about how john occasionally would do things with him unconsensually. dream and george hug. john has a dinner with george, its really fancy. mid way through he asks george to break up. george starts crying, being completely in shock. john starts yelling, and whilst yelling, reveals that for their "anniversary" he had been planning on proposing to george. he leaves. ends with george drinking a coca-cola and reflecting on his and johns relationship.

OH MY GOD IM SO SORRY. ALSO THERE WAS A REASON WHY I HATED JOHN LMAO DO JOHN SYMPATHISERS HOWS IT FEELLLLLLLLLL

i really really really hope i could've done this chapter justice. ive been planning this part specifically for so long, so i hope that these strung-together scenes have worked, and it feels sad. it sounds bad,, but like i hope that this made you sad, because that was the intention. john and george's relationship is nearly if not as important as dream and george's in this story ((sadly)), so their breakup has to be good.

i mentioned this in a comment to someone, but ive been thinking that when i have this finished i could write one shots or snippets about moments in this from dreams perspective, and this chapter would definitely be one of them. no promises though, ahaha!

also i foreshadowed the proposal thing in chapter ONE so like arent i smart like that and not one of you bitches got it (/lh)

next chapter is ALSO gonna be big so like look foward to that

Ruined

Chapter Notes

another tw for this chapter is needed, and that's alcohol use and implied drug use + intoxicated characters, and nsfw (?) content. that sounds really bad LMAO I SWEAR ITS NOT THAT BAD DONT WORRY!! enjoy :]

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“George?” Wilbur’s voice called to him, distant. George turned, blinking back to reality.

“Huh?”

“Are you alright?” He asked, concern clear in his voice. He was bent down to where George sat in a chair, the rest of *The Discs* behind him, the morning sun creeping against his face.

George stared at him slowly, memories of crying himself to sleep coming back to him. He looked around the room.

It had been so... rushed.

He couldn’t even wait two days to leave him. He only kept the mask of a happy couple on to show off, almost immediately when they were alone ending everything. The realisation hit George that he would have to tell *everyone*. Tell Dream, tell Alex, tell Niki— God, tell *Wilbur*.

Wilbur never liked John. But he liked George being taken. To him, being in a relationship where George was loved was helping himself heal. George had thought the same thing.

George remembered coming back into his van late, staring up at the underside of Tommy’s bed and thinking about what he *could’ve* said. What incredible speech that showed his point of view could’ve changed them for good. But he *hadn’t*. He’d let him leave as the victim. He’d let him leave with the upper hand, the woeful story.

George nodded, eyes puffy from crying.

“Okay,” Wilbur said slowly, turning to Niki and making a gesture as if ordering her to say something.

“George,” she said softly. “We don’t really like it how you’ve kind of just, left us for Dream’s band. It’s good that you’re making new friends, but you’re going to be playing only like three songs. You don’t need to spend that much time ‘practicing’.”

George smiled lopsidedly at how it mirrored the conversation he had been having the night before.

He felt so out of it, so thoroughly shit that he couldn’t give two fucks about whatever his band was trying to complain about.

“George?” Tommy asked. George looked at him sadly, looked at how much of himself he saw in him. He needed to catch up with him, about whether or not he was enjoying the tour.

George nodded, zoned out. “Uh, sorry.”

Wilbur stared at him. “You’re *sorry*. That’s all you’re gonna say?”

The trail that the conversation could lead to opened up in George’s mind, thinking of the way that they would comfort him. “I’m sorry. I just, John and I— we broke up last night.”

Wilbur’s face fell. Not into sympathy, but to something of exasperation. “cool? You should’ve done that *months* ago? I mean, good for you, but we’re kind of trying to have a conversation here.”

George stared up at him. “Do you not care?”

“Do I not—” Wilbur cut himself off, glancing back at Niki as if to exclaim some silent anger at George. “Do *you* not care?”

“Sorry,” George muttered, embarrassment pooling in his guts. “Sorry. Yeah, that. That was bad.”

“Yeah,” Niki repeated. That hurt. Fuck.

“You’re in *our* band,” Wilbur said. “Not his. Just because he’s— I don’t know, hot, or, has *money*, or whatever you see in him. You’re in our band.”

George nodded, ignoring Wilbur’s comment that implied attraction to him. “I know. I’m sorry.”

“Are you?” Wilbur asked. “Because sometimes it feels like you only care about yourself, when that’s the trait you hate most in others.”

George— fuck, he didn’t want to cry again. But it hurt. Yet another blow to his already hurt heart.

They hadn’t come to a conclusion with that, though. At least with John there was a solution, ending it. With his band, it was just a criticism of his behaviour as a person, from the people who had consistently helped him. And they didn’t even care that he was hurt— they only cared that they were hurt.

George went to the band that he had ‘left them’ for. Because if he had anybody, he had new friends. New faces. New shoulders to cry on and to laugh against.

He knew that some things were made to pass, but surely not with Wilbur, right? Surely not Niki’s soft voice and her giggles, not an actual, healthy bond?

George had lost so much, and he hadn’t even realised it.

Because he lived his life waiting. Waiting for it to hit— waiting for all bad decisions to topple over, but everytime they did he acted surprised. As though he hadn’t put this on himself.

Waiting is so much easier than changing, though.

How could he learn to change?

He went to Dream’s band nervously, almost scared of them shit-talking John. Because that reflected on George, it reflected on who he spent time with and who he connected with.

Dream opened the door. He looked about as shit as George felt. No makeup, unstyled hair, deep bags underneath his eyes that were red and glazed over. George assumed he looked the same.

“George,” Dream breathed, seeming taken aback. “Aren’t— aren’t you supposed to be with John?”

Is everything alright?"

George blinked slowly. "Yeah— no, uh." Here goes nothing. "We broke up."

Dream's face fell into an unreadable expression, something that, maybe just through George's rose eyed glasses, resembled relief. "What?"

"Me and John," George said slowly. "Last night."

"Oh, shit," Dream said, blinking slowly. "I'm— I'm sorry. Or happy for you. I don't know what.."

"Both kinda work," George said, smiling sadly. "Honestly, if anything, it's just poignant."

"Okay," Dream said, a smile creeping on his face, maybe from the use of the posh word, leant against the door frame.

"Are you *smiling*?" George asked.

"N—no," Dream said immediately, still smiling.

"I can't believe you," George tutted lightheartedly, rolling his eyes as he pushed himself inside.

Telling the rest of them was a lot less quiet, though still full of care.

"He *broke up with you?!* " Alex exclaimed loudly. "What the *fuck*. I'm going to kill that absolute bastard, what the fuck? You were *way* out of his league anyway, I'm glad he finally fucking realised that, but, damn."

"Dude, fuck him," Sapnap said. "Even his name is boring— *John*. What kind of a dumbass parent names their child John and expects them to succeed in life? He sure didn't, and isn't going to, that's for sure."

"Who does he like—" Karl paused for a second. "Who does he *think he is*? You're like, a young hot successful twink, and he, some old ugly man in his thirties—" John was not in his thirties, "—thinks he can break up with *you*? He's a dumbass, dude. Oh my god."

"Yeah," Alex said, "I'm— I would say I'm sorry, but I'm honestly happy for you that you lost that piece of shit boyfriend."

"Yup," Sapnap nodded.

"Well," Dream said, demeanour lifted. "On another note, in two days, you're gonna be performing with *the Dream*. Thoughts?"

George rolled his eyes, endearment clear in his voice. "You're so full of yourself."

"Yeah," Dream nodded proudly. "How could I not be when I have fans like you?"

Like that, they fell into a pretty normal practice. It was nice. Wilbur's words lingered in the back of George's mind, about how he had 'left' *The Discs* for the exact group of people he was spending time with.

"Yeah," George said during one point in their conversation. "He said he was going to marry me. Like, he had the ring and plans for where we were going to propose and everything. This just got in the way."

Dream's eyebrows raised.

"*Marry you?*" Alex repeated. "That's, that's like really weird. Aren't you supposed to like, have a conversation about that before you just pop out a ring?"

George nodded, murmuring, "I know."

"I can't picture you being married," Dream said. "I mean. Not to him, at least."

George tried not to look into his comment.

Seeing them made him feel better, at least slightly. Validated his feelings, almost. He still *hurt*, though. And there's nothing you can really do to fight a hurt heart. Every happy emotion turned bittersweet. Atleast he wasn't crying anymore.

"Hey—you!" Karl smacked George's shoulder on the way out.

"What?" George asked, glancing up at where he stood. A smirk grew on Karl's face.

"You are coming with me," he said, grinning. "And we are going to get fucking blasted out of our minds."

George blinked, "What?"

"You said you wanted to experience America, right?" Karl grinned. "This is the *perfect* time to do so. And I'm friends with *Dream*, so I know where to get great pot."

George smiled slightly, ideas flooding into his mind. He smiled, excitement already stirring in his veins. "Okay."

"Okay?"

"Yeah," George grinned widely. He wanted to ruin himself. He wanted to *live*, and get fucked, and do everything that John would disapprove of. He wanted to forget in ways that wouldn't be possible to be while attached to another so controlling. He grinned, "Okay."

With excited, childlike giggles, he changed into low-rise black jeans, a tight, salmon shirt, pearls that Dream had recommended for him to buy, and Dream's jacket. He caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror, almost laughing out loud at how much Dream had clearly influenced his fashion. But more importantly, he looked *hot*.

So, that weekday afternoon, George ended up in a pub, drinking like he was in Uni. His entire world blurred into a white and black screen of blues and pinks, thoughts that didn't make sense and deafening shitty pop. Grinding on men he had never once met, screaming along to lyrics that he wanted to replay to appreciate fully.

It was exactly what he had wanted.

He knew that he shouldn't have been accepting more and more drinks, and he knew that he shouldn't have taken that many hits that had been offered to him by complete strangers. His world was spinning in slow motion, every movement feeling like he was going to fall.

"What's your name?" a man who had been eyeing him up asked. George grinned, hiccuping, running through a list of names in his mind.

"Clay," he said over booming music.

“Pretty name for a pretty boy,” he said sensually. George stopped dancing for a second to get a good look at him, let his eyes run over his features. A little too light blonde. Same messy hair. No freckles.

He would do.

“What’s your name?” George asked. “Or do you want me to call you… something else?”

“What else would you call me, baby?” He smiled.

Dream.

“Hm,” George thought. “Depends.”

“On what?” he asked, eyebrow raising.

“How well you can fuck me.”

They ended up stumbling into the mens bathroom, hands running up and down against each other’s backs and tongues down each other’s throats. George closed his eyes, drunken mind letting him imagine it was Dream. George was pulled up by the stranger’s big arms, sat down on the sink and kissed energetically. George’s legs spread, wrapping them around the mans back at pulling him closer. His hips jerked against the him, whimpering into his mouth, and pulling off his jacket energetically.

Holy shit, Dream.

“Fuck, baby,” the man said breathlessly into George’s mouth, pulling him back to the reality of the situation.

He was good.

But he wasn’t Dream.

George pulled away slowly, and softly.

“Huh?” the stranger asked. “Is everything alright?”

George nodded quickly, inebriated. “Yeah, yeah, sure, I just— I’m sorry, you seem really nice. I just, I don’t want to have sex with you.”

The man nodded. “No, that’s— that’s totally fine.” Relief spread over George’s face, relaxing. “I probably shouldn’t either.”

“Why’s that?” George asked.

“Oh, uh,” the man laughed slightly. “There’s another guy.”

George nodded, “Oh— me too. I just got broken up with last night.”

“Oh, that sucks,” he laughed, nodding. “This guy never even liked me enough to get with me in the first place.”

“I know how that feels,” George nodded, dazed. It was weirdly nice. Like not even a minute ago they hadn’t been eating each others faces.

“Yeah,” the man said. “My name’s Caleb, if that matters anymore.”

“George,” George said. Caleb grinned, opening his mouth to point out, when George explained, “I lied, earlier. My *real* name is George.”

“Well, George,” Caleb said. “Good luck with getting that guy back.”

“I don’t want him back!” George grinned, “No— but, you too. Good luck. He might just like you, you never know.”

“Hopefully,” Caleb breathed.

George stumbled back, brain fuzzy, mind whirling. Back to Karl, grabbing onto him with a giggle.

“Oh my god, fucking hunk you got there, who was that?” Karl grinned, gesturing at the bathroom.

“Nobody, doesn’t matter,” George slurred, “Can you — get us a taxi. I wanna go to your bus.”

Karl nodded enthusiastically, eyes red. The taxi took only minutes to arrive, them both pouring outside and getting in, speaking obnoxiously.

They stumbled out, into the dark of the night, catching sight of Dream’s parked bus. George’s hands were shaky, mind loud but quiet. He pushed the door open, stumbling in with Karl, giggling loudly.

Dream lay down at one of the long couches, mindlessly scrolling through his phone and talking to Sapnap. He looked good. So good. *He always looks so good.*

George giggled, stumbling in and moving towards Dream. He felt light, falling down against the seat, thigh pressed to Dream’s. Drunkenly, he didn’t care. “Dream, Dreamie!”

“Hi..” Dream said, clearly slightly confused, but smiling.

“*Hi*,” George giggled, hiccuping slightly. He was fucking hammered. “I was just-- I was just,” he stumbled for words, clicking his fingers. There was an intoxicated slur to his words, “Karl! Karl! What were we talking about?”

“Dude,” Karl looked shocked by the words coming out of his mouth. “*I don’t know.*”

Laughter began to bubble up in both of their throats at the same time, and suddenly they were giggling like it was the funniest thing that had happened to them in years. Dream laughed awkwardly, every sober person in the car staring at them, clearly confused. George drunkenly pressed his face into Dream’s chest, laughing into the fabric of his shirt. He looked up, seeing through dark hair, and giggled lightly at how close he was to Dream’s face. He saw the light stubble that had started to form around his chin, and poked at it. It felt prickly.

“Heh, you need to shave,” he said, tone high, dazed. He pushed himself further onto Dream, intertwining their legs. He wanted warmth. He wanted to cuddle.

“Are you *drunk*?” Dream asked, even though he clearly already knew the answer, tender smile creeping onto his face.

“*No...*” George lied, grabbing Dream’s hair from behind his ear to twirl it around in his middle and index finger. Dream’s breath seemed to hitch, clearly unsure of how to react.

When George was drunk, he was touchy.

“You have a pretty boy lying on you and you’re not going to say anything?” He tilted his head, grinning lopsidedly.

Apparently, when he was drunk, he was bold, as well.

“You *are* drunk,” Dream said breathlessly.

Sapnap seemed very uncomfortable, side eyeing Dream and raising his eyebrows. Dream sighed, pushing George off of him softly, but forcefully. Unhooking their ankles.

This caused George to whine at the lack of warmth. He wanted Dream, he wanted his arms around him. He wanted to hold his back, to hook up their legs.

“I’m going to bed,” Sapnap said, getting up slowly, giving Dream some kind of look. “Use protection, I guess.”

“That is *not* going to happen,” Dream said, but George laughed at Sapnap’s words, wishing him a goodnight. Karl went to bed with him, giggling something to George that even he couldn’t hear.

It left George and Dream, alone.

Through the yellowed confines of his vision, George could see what he thought was a redness on Dream’s cheeks. He was flushed pink, and flustered, and George was drunk, and in the mood to make bad decisions. Dream turned to him, hair fallen over one of his eyes, looking absolutely bewildered.

“Wait, so you’re —” Dream spoke, clearly just to stop silence. “You’re *drunk*.”

George giggled lightly, nodding quickly.

“Shit,” Dream breathed. “Um. Oh— I should. Wait, you need, you need a— I’ll make you a, um, anti-hangover thing.”

Dream, though he was sober, was the one struggling to form sentences clearly. George bathed in it victoriously. Dream slowly got up, moving towards the kitchen area of the bus, and grabbing out a mug, and some food from the fridge.

“I can deal with a hangover fine,” George stared at him, though not protesting. His words slurred together easily, British accent weak. “I was havin’ a hangover when I first came to America.”

“Were you?” Dream asked, being able to face George from the angle of the kitchen. “I couldn’t notice. We were so *mean* to each other.”

“I liked it,” George laid back in his seat. “Sometimes I miss it.”

“You liked it?” Dream repeated, looking down at him.

George nodded, “Mhm. It was hot. You were hot. I mean, you’re always hot.”

Dream’s eyes widened, flushing deeper, hands nearly dropping the glass. “Um. Thank— thank you.”

“You’re cute,” George said, mind fuzzed. They fell into a silence, tension lying heavily in the air. George had to make sure not to let his eyes flutter shut, dazed mind trying to doze off. To focus, he watched Dream cut make him a coffee. George hated coffee. He wasn’t going to tell him that, though.

"I like your hands," he slurred. "You're good with them. I think about them all the time."

Dream was clearly having a hard time to gain composure. "D-do you?"

George nodded, "Yeah. You'd *be* good with them, in *other ways* than just playing the guitar, wouldn't you?" George paused, smirking. "Well, are you? I mean, there's only one way for you to prove it to me."

Dream paled, eyes widening and freezing up slightly. George wondered if he was that obvious when Dream would make him flustered. Nervous laughter was Dream's way of assuring his sobriety, exclamations of "*What?*" to gain some form of platonic air.

All that George could provide was small, breathless giggles, laying back in the chair.

"I—" Dream paused, placing the coffee down against the counter with a small clink of the china. "You—you can sleep here. I'll get blankets."

George nodded slowly, intoxicated grin creeping onto his face. He laid down, listening to the toast pop up from the counter. Dream brought two duvet back, movements fast and avoiding George's eye. George shuffled up the couch, his shirt bunching up around his back and the flat of his stomach revealing, slight v-line that lead down to the low-rise of his raw denim jeans. Dream's eyes scanned over it, breathe audibly hitching as his movements faltered for a second, before lightly lying the duvet against him, tucking him in. George didn't say anything, looking up at him with wide eyes.

"Are you comfortable?" Dream asked lightly.

George nodded. "Is it your duvet? Smells like you."

Dream scoffed slightly, nodding. His fingertips lightly brushes George's collarbone as he tucked him in, body heat hot.

"*Duvet*," he chuckled. "Yeah— um. It's from my bed."

George nodded, falling down into it deeper, letting the smell seep in. George loved it. Sweat, smoke, and wine. "What's wrong with saying duvet?"

"Nothing— it's just," Dream laughed slightly. "It's so *posh*."

"What do you call it, then?"

"Like—" Dream thought for a second. "Comforter, I guess."

"That's stupid," George said. Dream smiled at him in this way that he just would sometimes, so full of compassion and care.

"You're stupid," Dream said affectionately.

Dream glaced at the counter, seeing the popped—up toast. He smiled slightly, exhaling and getting up. George continued listening to him stir up whatever brew he had.

"How are you with taking pills?" Dream asked.

"Fine," George said absently. "I don't have a gag reflex, so."

Dream *choked*, making an ungodly sound of surprise and nearly stumbling over. George laughed

loudly, rolling his eyes at his lack of hiding surprised arousal.

He nodded furiously, just as flustered as before. “Yeah. Lets. Um. I’ll get you... that. A pill. Yeah.”

Dream grabbed the toast, coffee, and a Hydrodol pill, and wandered back to George, placing everything down on a side table by the couch. George bit into the buttered bread, making a face at the bland taste.

“Sorry,” Dream said, “I should’ve put jam on it or something.”

George scoffed, “Jam?”

“I dunno,” Dream laughed, resting his face in his palm. He didn’t have any makeup on, but still his eyelashes were thick, and dark against lightly tanned skin. Freckles splotted across his nose bridge like dotted fabric.

George finished the bread in only a few bite, leaning back down on the couch and smiling back at him.

“I wanna *cuddle*. ” he huffed, thin fingers grabbing at his arms and trying to pull him down. Trying to get Dream’s arms around his, holding him.

Dream let out a small, “Okay,” and pulled back, grabbing George’s wrists and holding them in place.

“I wanna sleep in the same bed as you,” George said softly.

Dream’s look was tender. “You know that’s not a good idea.”

“I really don’t.”

Dream sighed, handing George the water. George grabbed the mug, placing the pill against his tongue and drinking it slowly. You could hear it lapping into his throat, and George could tell the way that Dream’s eyes stared intently at his parted lips that he was clearly having a hard time to regain self control. George bathed in it proudly. He finished the coffee, turning to look at him.

Just give in already. Come on.

Dream hovered over him, grabbing the mug and clearing his throat. He placed it against the table. “Are... are you comfortable here?”

George shrugged, adjusting himself below the covers and pulling them up to his chin. He moaned slightly at the comfort. Dream looked completely bewildered.

“You already asked me that,” he smiled.

“Did I?” Dream asked. George nodded.

“I should really go to my bed,” he said softly, as George’s eyes began to feel more and more heavy.

“No, stay,” George said, eyes fluttering closed. He knew, that at the core, all men are weak creatures. Maybe he wouldn’t *touch him*, but he would stay. He knew that he was faltering between movements, he knew that even if only internally, George had flicked a switch within him.

George felt a kiss be pressed against his forehead and the soft American murmur of a, “Goodnight,

George.”

George felt his heart race in his chest, trying to stop a wide grin from forming or a squeal into his pillow. The soft gesture was so much better, so much more rememberable than any kiss he had stolen from a stranger in the bathroom of a club. But, unlike Dream, he was able to hide, only stirring slightly as he heard the footsteps further and further away.

Chapter End Notes

i have had around like half (?) that last scene prewritten or at least planned since i saw that clip of "drunk george" lmao. ALSO THEY KISSED UR HONOUR?? ON THE FOREHEAD BUT LIKE???

as always, comments are greatly appreciated <3

Red

Chapter Notes

now, reader, you may be wondering, "why does it say that this is the last chapter?" no, don't worry, it's not getting discontinued, i'll explain all of that in depth in the end note, but first, read this chapter.

holy shit this chapter took so long to write, even with like 1k of it being prewritten but im actually so proud of it, and hopefully 8k words was worth the wait!! explicit nsfw warning! enjoy reading :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Blinking his eyes open, George was met with a kind lack of a headache when he woke up. Abstract thoughts dedicated his mind, until memories began pouring back to him.

Holy fuck.

Dream had *kissed* him.

George sat up instantly, eyes wide. He moved nimble fingertips to caress his forehead lightly, trying to feel it as though there would still be the wet of Dream's lips the, reliving the blurry memory of goodnights and confined squeals.

George had been *horny* last night. And had gone to *Dream*. And.. and..

"Fuck," George whispered. "Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck."

He got up, sliding out of *Dream's* duvet covers, seeing the sultry outfit that he had came to Dream in, trying to search his memory for what he had *said* to Dream in it.

George glanced around the bus, feeling the wheels roll underneath him. Of course. Of course, he just had to be stuck on a moving vehicle with somebody he had announced to about his lack of gag reflex.

George's hands shook, glancing around for a sign of anything to slip on, seeing a discarded plain black sweater against the floor, assuming it must be Karl's. He pulled off the tight shirt that was drenched in sweat and smelt of wine and pot, glad to have discarded of that, and sliding on the sweater. It fit oversized, sliding past his wrists and down to his distal knuckles, pink fingernails and pale fingertips peeking through. Glancing down at his lower half, he caught sight of his oversized jeans, slipping those off as well to give some form of comfort to himself.

After undoing his fly, and beginning to slip it past the curve of his ass- midway down his thighs, the door to the hallway creaked open. George froze.

Of course it would.

Dream's hair was a mess, curled over his eyes. He blinked, looking George up and down and flushed slightly. He grinned as his eyes glazed over George's exposed thighs. "Sorry, am I interrupting something?"

George paled, eyes widening and feeling his chest fall with embarrassment. Yeah. It looked like he was about to do that. Fuck. “Uh, uh, no, I was just—”

“I’m *kidding*, I’m just kidding, George,” he said, soft, morning laughter bubbling up in his throat. “How are you feeling, hm?”

He seemed.. awfully casual. Like he had thought George would forget that he kissed him. Like it meant nothing. “Um, I’m— I’m feeling fine, wait.”

He slid the jeans off past his knees, down off his feet, socks catching on the end of the raw fabric and bunching up as they got pulled off his feet with his pants. He was left in only tight black boxer briefs that weren’t visible beneath the black sweater he had taken, which fell down a little past his mid-thigh.

Dream blinked, “Is— is that my sweater?”

George looked down at the jumper he had on, holding back a groan of complaint. . “Oh— I, uh, I’ll take it—”

“No, no, no, no, it’s fine,” Dream said, holding his hand up when George grabbed the front to pull it up and off, giving him a verbal protest to stop. George let go, nodding. “You’re going to have a collection soon. First the jacket now this? What’s next, you steal my pants?”

George laughed awkwardly, sliding strands of dark hair behind his ear. “That’s so stupid.”

Dream smiled, tutting his lips. He had on the most... normal outfit. A white t-shirt and grey sweatpants. Usually he was styled with faux fur, leather, and layers of pearls. George’s eyes shamefully scanned over the section of his tanned, strong chest that was visible beneath his shirt.

“I’m,” George started, unsure on what would be the correct wording. “I’m sorry for how I acted last night. I was really stupid, and I’m sorry if I made you uncomfortable, or—”

“No, no, no, no,” Dream shook his head, holding his hand up. “Don’t feel bad. It was, it was just like, funny, right?”

George nodded, heartbeat calming slightly. Funny. That’s an excuse he could use. “Yeah. I don’t really remember it.”

That was a lie. He remembered it uncomfortably well. Bats of eyelashes, sexual offers and flirtatious comments.

Dream leant against the doorframe, smiling fondly. It felt almost domestic. Something favourable. “How did you sleep?”

“Alright,” George said, a lie. He had dreamt. Dreamt about John. Angry, short cut, sentences and inverted colours.

“That’s good,” Dream smiled, yawning. “Now you ask me how I slept.”

“How did you sleep, Dream?”

“Like a *baby*, thank you,” Dream said, travelling further into George’s space. George blinked tiredly.

“Hey,” he murmured. “I’ll make you some breakfast.”

Dream blinked at him. “Are you... a good cook?”

George was absolutely shit, but had gained somewhat of an ego about it considering the fact that everything John had attempted to make looked like it had been regurgitated by an ugly bird, then burnt.

George nodded, “Yeah,” he paused, considering being honest. “Ish.”

It turned out, saying that would be a major mistake, after he ending up breaking down over not being able to cook eggs correctly, Alex getting out and tutoring him using the little knowledge he had, whilst Dream giggled from the sidelines. Karl spent his morning— or more early afternoon, they woke up at 12:45, hungover. Karl messaged him, some complaint about how George had gotten “special treatment” with his anti hangover pill (and kisses goodnight, though George wouldn’t dare mention that to him). Eating breakfast, George’s mind flew back to *The Discs*, how much he had disappointed them. But there were moments when you didn’t want to own up to your own shitty actions, because they were embarrassing. Because taking accountability meant a reminder that he wasn’t perfect, and who was he if not constantly striving for perfection?

“John’s leaving today, right?” George asked, mouth full of eggs that Dream had taken over cooking.

Dream nodded, cracking open another egg. “Yeah. Good riddance, right?”

George hummed in agreement, “I wonder he did— yesterday.”

“Probably fucked some uglier american lookalike of you,” Dream said, watching the egg sizzle. “That’s what I would do, at least.”

Alex turned to him, blinking in shock at Dream, half eaten egg hanging off of his fork. “You just admitted out loud in the same room as him that you would fuck an uglier lookalike of George.”

“I mean, like, if I was George’s ex boyfriend of one day,” Dream corrected casually, though the implication was strong and George tried hard to ignore it.

“I mean, it’s what I did yesterday,” George said, shrugging.

“You fucked a lookalike of yourself yest—” Sappap began to repeat, George cutting him off.

“No, no, no, I mean I like— with him,” he began, only realising once he had started speaking that if he realistically if he had any hopes for him and Dream, that would not be something kept between him and Karl.

“Oh,” Dream said slowly. He looked more embarrassed than George felt.

“How are you handling the breakup?” Alex asked, having been asleep when George came back shit-faced. He laughed, shrugging.

“I don’t know,” he said honestly. “I feel better than I did yesterday.”

That day past incredibly fast, the performance where George would go with *The Discs* being the day after, so therefore having to make sure there would be absolutely no mistakes. He had improved almost inhumanely, being able to accurately get every note correct, even adding his own parts that weren’t written down for him to learn.

Caroline watched them perform all three songs— *The Trail* (Catchy, poppy, but still with a little

grunge to it) , *You leave BURNING!* (probably the most aggressive on the album, one of the first tracks. It had a very early 2000s pop-punk sound) , and *Another Year Of Smoke* (vulnerable, but not as vulnerable as *Shattered*, still with a louder tone other than quiet and sad. Dream said it was about his nicotine addiction). She clapped when they finished, praising them on learning, and patting George on the back.

“Now,” she said, clapping her hands together once she had finished complimenting them. “There’s only one song in between *The Trail* and *You leave me BURNING!* — *Shattered*, right?”

Dream nodded slowly.

“Right,” she said. “George, I think it would be easier if you just stayed on stage for that, instead of running on and then back off. Sorry, it’s kind of last minute.”

George blinked. *Shattered* . He could barely listen to it, let alone watch Dream play it only a metre away from him, staring at him. Not being able to leave.

“No,” George said, “It’s— it’s fine. Yeah, that makes sense.”

“Great!” she smiled. George tried to side eye Dream, try and see his expression, while Dream must’ve wanted to do the same thing. Their eyes met, darting to the floor in seconds. Dream must be even more nervous— he’s the one that sung it.

Caroline hugged Dream on the way out, murmuring something into his ear. Dream had nodded, whispering something back and shaking her hand.

“Fuck,” George said once she had left. “Fuck, fuck, I’m so nervous.”

“At least this can be a distraction from feeling shit about John, right?” Sapnap tried. George glared at him, this would only make him feel worse.

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As the show crept closer, George only realised how big of a mistake he had made would be. Everyone would care if he messed up, because they knew the songs. People would comment on the way that he played, make sure he was up to their already high standards. Would he ruin their performances, leaving crowds with the complaint of “Why did they add that new guy, they were better without him.” And they’d be right. And the band would have to tell him, let him down easily. Fuck. Fuck.

On top of that, he would have to perform with *The Discs*, of whom had asked him to not do exactly what he had been doing for the past 24 hours— ignore them. It wasn’t like he had much of a choice. Well, he had *chosen* to sleep in the same bus as Dream, but that was more of a drunken decision.

They all stared at him with wide eyes once he arrived at the venue, muttering insults behind their breath at his expensive dark clothes. Because he looked more like someone from Dream’s band than Wilburs— layers of jewelery and light makeup. He looked like someone who had left them.

He felt bad. He had lied to himself when he said he didn’t, blinded by missing his lover. Who he missed. Oh, how he missed the comfort of “Dream kissed me as a friend, because I have a boyfriend.” Now he didn’t.

He wondered if Dream was right, that he’d gone off and found some rebound relationship. George had often wondered if he had cheated on him, though never brought it up in fear of loosing him. He

should've brought it up.

He remembered those days when he would come home, smelling of a new cologne. He remembered John's guilty looks, the way he would hold back from touches. Little, little clues and a gut instinct wasn't enough to go off, but George's gut was normally correct, whether he wanted it to be or not.

Getting his hair and makeup done was horribly awkward, being stuck with a person that kissed you and then assumed you had issued it. He had fallen so deep into fame and only just realised he could never step out of it. Now, his name could be a memory of people that he had never even met. That was terrifying.

Stuck in between wanting to bring the kiss up, and being on the verge of a panic attack isn't really the best place to be. He tried so hard to steady his breaths, Dream deep in a conversation with Tina when he noticed this.

"Are you alright?" he asked softly. George nodded— a lie. Dream pressed, "are you sure?"

"I—" George started. "I'm not sure."

Dream's gaze softened. "Hey, it's okay if you're nervous, I totally—"

"I think he cheated on me," George confessed. The words hung in the air, Tina stopping combing Dream's hair to bring her hand to her mouth.

Dream started to form a "What", but the word teetered off into silence. He looked confused, eyebrows furrowed. "Are you— are you sure? I just, I don't get why he'd do that."

"Me either," George said. "I just... maybe it was because I didn't love him good enough. Maybe it's my fault. Maybe, *maybe* —"

"Hey, hey," Dream said softly. "He's gone. And he was an asshole. It's over, he's out of your life, you don't need to worry about him anymore."

"Yeah, but," George started, words trailing away into Dream's green eyes. "I'm sorry," was all that George said. He was sorry. Why, to Dream, he didn't know, but he was sure there was some reason that he hadn't owned up to yet.

"Why are you—" Dream started, furrowing his eyebrows. "George, seriously, are you okay?"

George didn't have time to answer, someone calling Dream for something. George felt like he was going to be sick. He was alone.

He wanted to be with Wilbur, or Niki. Tell them everything, about this kiss. He was so overwhelmed, and new friends can comfort you well, but they won't know the depth of it. Dream, he trusted with his life deep down, but at the surface, needed to hide. He couldn't let himself get close because then he'd get too attached. Or, fuck, has that already happened?

Am I a bad person? He asked himself, through gasps of air and blurring vision. He was going to die. Right there. Get on stage, fall to the ground. Because someone who was alive could breathe, someone who was alive had enough air.

And then he was, being escorted by men in black to the stage, to perform with people that hated him.

“George,” Niki said, far away. How had George gotten to the point where even she was distant? Was it happening again?

George hugged her. He was the one to reach out. It was fleeting, but it let him catch his breath. An unspoken apology. He breathed, in, out. She knew why.

“I’m sorry,” he said into her shoulder.

“We know you are,” she said softly. “We just wish you could show it more.”

It made sense. Something, something that made sense.

That performance was done autopilot, Tommy and Wilbur both looking uncomfortable. George wondered in Dream was watching. If he watches all of George’s performances like George watches his.

He missed a few keys in one song, thoughts corrupted by that idea, and Wilbur looking disappointed. Everyone was disappointed in him.

He rushed off, hands shaking to find water, and it being handed to him. Wilbur walked towards him, George expecting angry words, but was met with arms around him. Wilbur was always the one to hug George first.

“I’m sorry if I was harsh the other day,” he said. “I know.. I know I didn’t know the details of you and John’s relationship. I should’ve been more considerate about that.”

George shrugged into his shoulders. *He* was sorry. And he was in the right. That was how goddamned manipulate George was to him, twisting his thoughts, and, and.

“No,” George said softly. “I’m the sorry one, dumbass. I was stupid, I should’ve done that. I know I’m in your band.”

“Good,” Wilbur laughed slightly, pulling back. It reminded George of a night so long ago, so distant. Under a sky of colours George couldn’t even remember. When ‘*Dream*’ was only a punching bag for him to let his anger out on.

The half an hour until George’s second performance passed painfully slow, and even when it would start, he would have to wait another twenty minutes until playing his first song. For once, he didn’t watch Dream’s performance from the side like his cheerleader, he spent it making conversation with *The Discs*, joking like old friends do. It was nice. He had seen them everyday, but not realised how much he had missed them.

And then, the time came. He needed to get on stage, and perform. In front of all of those people. One problem being solved doesn’t solve them all. He’s such a dumbass.

Walking up to the stage, Tommy stopped him. Placed his hand on his shoulder.

“Hey,” he said. “Good luck!”

George smiled. It really, did, make him feel slightly better. So that when he ran up the stairs, ran into the eyes of the crowd, toward Dream’s smile, his eyes, his stupid laugh and jokes, he felt slightly better. He smiled, really.

Dream smiled at him back. His one sign of anything real. A grin seen so many times before, once a smirk, once something that was used as a taunt. When had George let it change? Dream’s chest was

exposed, shirtless underneath a black leather jacket. You could see the sweat that lined his abs, the crevice in between each bump. His v-line, something that George thought was done haunting him.

“Now,” Dream said, voice booming over the speakers. “This is the lovely George Henry Davidson, who is going to be playing a few songs with us today. Isn’t he just so pretty?”

The crowd screamed at this, Dream’s technique of flirting with anything and anyone to create a headline working successfully. It felt.. Appreciating. Not everything needs to become a stress if you don’t let it.

And then they kicked into a song, and Dream was dancing sensually, how George used to always critique him for. Now, he struggled to remember the chords that he had been practicing for weeks. Through body rolls along to the catchy tune, he jumped and managed to keep his voice still. It strained slightly, a rasp to it, which somehow became attractive. It was addictive to watch him so close, so real.

And then he was walking towards George, eyes dark and smirk growing back. And then he pulled him towards George, moved the microphone close to George’s mouth and shared it with him, so close that it almost created the illusion that they were kissing. The crowd was hollering and squealing so loud that it made their ears hurt. George could see the freckles that dotted across Dream’s nose, mouth pouring lyrics about some hypnotic girl. George wondered if he was that hypnotic. Dream sure was.

Then, unexpectedly, he pulled back, the bridge having finished, jumping into the chorus as though it was nothing. He had to know how it was making George feel in a way that he had promised himself he’d never let himself feel at the hands of Dream ever, ever again. He had to see, through some sadistic gaze, what it did to him.

The first song faded out, the crowd still the loudest it had been since the very first performance. Some girl in the audience had ripped her bra off, throwing it at Dream’s feet. He laughed at it, picking it up and putting it on Sappnap. Then, the crowd was laughing. George knew he was just filling time. Pretending that the next song wouldn’t come.

But then it did. He couldn’t waste time anymore, George couldn’t tiptoe around it anymore.

It started slow, as always. Some group of people light up the torches from their phones, waving them around in the air.

It meant something. It was about George, and George knew that. And George liked him. And John was gone.

If, if, he made a move. Would it work?

The realisation hit him fast, in front of thousands of people. He knew that Dream liked him— it was obvious. And, and George liked him back. George couldn’t remember exactly when he had that realisation, overtime, it just became something that he had come to terms with.

Is this it? Is this the second chance he had prayed for? Could this be not a wrong place, wrong time, but instead an opportunity?

Because those lyrics, they meant something. George always knew they had. The lyrics practically spelt out “George” in capital letters, but George still managed to deflect the meaning onto something else. Maybe.. Maybe he was ready for something. Maybe he was ready to be fearless. To be ruined.

-

Alex had exclaimed as soon as they were done, riding on the high of a finished, good performance, "Oh my *god*, that was so good!"

George nodded enthusiastically, holding onto his arms and jumping up and down with child-like excitement. They celebrated by hugging each other and yelling, exclaiming compliments and hollering with both bands.

"You're like so good at the electric guitar, now," Wilbur had said to George.

"Oh, so you're saying I was bad before, I see how it is," George responded sarcastically, causing them all to laugh, Wilbur throwing apologies back at him.

It had been a good performance. He had performed well. It was over. It was okay. George's mind flew back to the way Dream had shared the microphone with him, how close he had been to his lips. George was pulled into dressing rooms, trying on different outfits, and through some series of events, ended up alone in the backroom. Dream just having walked in.

Dream stared at him through lidded eyes. His hair was messy, throat raw from how hard he had been singing. Sweat lined the edge of his jaw, tinting his chest. You could see his chest considering the fact that he was shirtless below his leather jacket. George had paid so much attention to that. He was *hot*. So fucking hot. George wanted to watch the way his muscles flexed. Lick every vein. He felt like he did when he was a hormonal teenager, heartbeat racing as he watched him manhandle players across the field.

"George," Dream breathed. His voice was raw, and croaky from how hard he had been singing, giving it a rasp that was dangerous. The sheer amount of sensuality that filled the air as soon as he walked in was shocking. Hateable.

"I, uh," George cleared his throat, thinking back to the night before. "What are you doing?"

Dream laughed, nervous. He didn't know why. His words were strange, "I can't believe you don't remember."

"Remember what?"

"How drunk you were last night?" he said. Oh no. Oh god no, not this conversation.

George's stomach flipped at the rasp of his voice, trying desperately hard to focus. To leave. Because this wasn't going to end well. George shook his head, not daring to move. "No." He paused, "Did I- did I say anything bad?"

"Bad?" George bit his tongue, trying desperately hard not to whine from the sound of his voice alone. He was obsessed with it. So, so, obsessed. Clay continued, "What do you mean by bad?"

He walked closer to him, stepping slowly. Green eyes to brown. Staring at the person who had changed his life. Who, without fail, managed to ruin every aspect of what made him himself and bring him back together with a flick of a wrist. He never realised how easy it was for George to be ruined.

George was ready to be ruined.

His voice quivered. "Like, I— I don't know. I can get.." his mind searched for the right word, trying to avoid 'horny' or 'slutty', "...touchy. When I'm drunk."

“Yeah,” Dream nodded. “You were touchy. You wanted to cuddle with me. In my bed.”

George nodded slowly, scoffing slightly. “Sorry.”

“You also said that I’m hot,” Dream’s eyes were locked with his. “And you... you think about my hands. That you like them. And that you don’t have a gag reflex.”

George internally cursed his inebriated self and his boldness, feeling his cheeks flush hot. “Oh.”

“Do you *really* not remember that?” Dream repeated, seeing right through George’s facade of not being able to hold a good lie. “Or do you. Are you just trying to avoid admitting to acting like.. Like one of my fucking groupies? Because some part of you, deep down, even if you don’t remember that, meant it.”

“Why did you kiss me, then?” George’s voice wrung loud, causing Dream to close his mouth, pressing his lips together. “What did *that* mean. Because... because *you* we sober. You meant that.”

“That...” Dream tried. “I... a friend could kiss a friend on the forehead. What are you trying to say?”

The sentence rang throughout George’s mind for a second, the mere possibility of uttering the words that he was about to say out loud frightening. But.. but he was tired of being frightened.

“Kiss me like a friend wouldn’t,” George said, voice small, but words sultry. His eyes locked with Dream’s. “Kiss me like you mean it. Kiss me like we both know you *want to*.”

Dream’s eyes were dark. Dark when he pulled on George’s shirt, a second of faltering, and kissed him. Kissed him, and it was dirty. And it was red.

And George finally knew what he had promised to when he agreed to be young.

A gasp emitted from his lips from surprise, moving his lips to press against his, locking with his and every gap between their bodies closing. George couldn’t *think*. It was happening. Dream grinded against them, and they both paused as if to say *holy shit*. Every touch was electrifyingly real, asked the exasperated question of “God, how did we take *this long*?”

Dream’s hands were on George’s back, sliding up and under his shirt and feeling his upper back. George couldn’t breathe. He didn’t want to breathe, it was too *everything*.

Until they heard the light footsteps from down the hall, and in merely a second, pulled away from each other’s touch, each other’s kiss, eyes still blown and pants overwhelmingly tight.

The door creaked open, and Sapnap stood, eyes glazed over and smelling of pot.

“Oh,” he stared, glancing in between them. “Sorry, I was just gonna— it’s really cold outside.”

“No, it’s fine,” Dream said, voice husky in a way that George had only dreamt of.

“Yeah,” George nodded, voice deeper than expected. Dream was looking at him. George’s neck burned. “It’s fine. I think we were just about to leave, anyway.”

“Okay, sick,” Sapnap nodded, oblivious. “Thanks. Dream, I’m crashing your bed.”

“Cool,” Dream said, uninterested, eyes glued to George. “Hey, we aren’t, like, driving tonight, or anything, right?”

Sapnap shook his head. “Uh.. no. Why?”

“Nothing important,” Dream’s voice was dismissive, grabbing onto George’s elbow and pulling him out, taking his phone out as soon as the door closed behind them, standing in the dark hallway.

“There’s gotta be a hotel around here somewhere,” Dream breathed, the tapping from his phone audible. He pushed his phone into his pocket. “There’s one only a few miles away from here. C’mon.”

A small smile formed on his face, a smile that expressed the wave of shock and adrenaline that pulsed through George, a smile of “*holy shit, we’re actually doing this*”. And then Dream giggled slightly, and his hand fell from the crevice of George’s elbow to his forearm, down to his palm. Intertwined their fingers, and squeezed.

George followed him. Followed him out, down the stairs and into the city, the light patter of the rain falling down lightly against the gray pavement.

Dream ran out, hand still intertwined with George’s. “Wait.”

George grinned, “What?”

“*Wait.*” Dream smiled widely, staring at George with big, hopeful eyes. “There’s no paparazzi here.”

“What does—” George smiled back, George smiled back because, fuck, he’s *holding hands* with Dream like it’s nothing. “What? Why—”

Dream looked around for a second, glancing around at the open, dark abyss that was the night and pulling George forward to intertwine their lips. It was soft, softer than the kisses he had stolen inside. Dream pulled away, glancing around, and started to run.

George began to protest, a small, enamoured, “Wh—” when Dream called out, loud, into the sky.

“Come with me, idiot!”

So George did. He ran from the venue to some fancy hotel, ran yelling curses and insults to Dream through the pouring rain. And Dream laughed, calling out to him, jumping and running and hugging like young people do.

His clothes were soaked by the light shower that poured from the sky by the time they reached the hotel, George panting for gulps of air and holding onto his knees for balance. Dream was there before him, fit and laughing about how weak he is. George panted into his hands as Dream booked them a room, smirking. The man behind the counter looked star-struck.

“Great,” he said, glancing at George as he took the key. “Thank you.”

They walked into the elevator slowly, Dream nudging George, and George nudging him back. They stood in front of the two mental doors, waiting for it to reach their floor, Dream side-eyeing him and trying not to laugh.

The elevator clicked to the bottom floor. A couple of two walked out, holding hands and eyes widening as soon as their eyes landed on Dream.

“Holy shit, you’re—” the man said, Dream cutting him off dismissively.

“Dream, yeah,” he pushed through into the elevator, flashing a small smile at them as a signal to leave him the fuck alone. He gestured for George to follow him in, and he did.

Dream fumbled with the buttons, muttering to himself as he read out the number to their room, and clicking on metal button. The door slid shut tauntingly slow, and with a small ring, began to ascend to the third floor.

George turned Dream around, and kissed him against the door.

It was all so romanticized. Something George never thought would actually be real, nothing that he ever thought would be something that he would get to live through. Feelings like this.

Dream pressed his thigh in between George’s legs, and George exhaled into his mouth a curse, and the elevator clicked to the correct floor.

Dream grabbed his hand once more, shakily and excitedly pulling him down the long corridors, fumbling to fit the key in and before they could even look around the room, immediately pinning George to the back of the door and kissing him, holding his hands above his head. He pulled George’s shirt up and over his head, catching on George’s ears, them both giggling slightly. But then Dream kissed him lower, against his collarbone, down to his nipple, sucking.

“Bedroom,” George whined, Dream pulling off and nodding in agreement.

George’s eyes scanned across the hotel, expensive and clean, golden. A perfect place to be ruined.

Dream found the bedroom, pulling open the door and practically throwing George against the bed, bouncing slightly on the pillows.

“I,” Dream started, voice low. “I want, I want this to be about you. Because you deserve it.”

George nodded, slowly.

“I’m going to make you feel what he never could,” Dream says, looking up, “Is that— is that OK?”

“Fuck,” George bit his lip, avoiding Dream’s gaze and nodding profusely. “Okay— Mhm.”

Dream stared at him through lidded eyes, grin teetering up on his face, “good boy.”

George whined, thrusting his hips up involuntarily and using one arm to cover his eyes.

“Take your pants off,” the way Dream’s tone was so careful felt mocking, humiliating. George slipped his arm down to his side and moved his hands down to unbuckle his belt, then unzip his jeans. Dream’s gaze lay on him, heavy. He smirked as George pushed them down to his knees, helping him by pulling them off down the calves off his legs, getting caught in his socks.

Dream’s hands went to grab George’s thighs, moving them up, down. George’s heart was beating fast, and loud. An orchestrated beat that had been building for far to long, Dream the conductor.

“These next, if that’s OK,” Dream said, playing with the waistband of George’s briefs. George pulled those off quickly, raising his hips so he could pull them over the curve of his ass, the curve of his cock. It sprung out, pink and upturned. And Dream stared at it with his look that was so full of possessiveness, so pleased. George’s hands moved to cover his bare chest feverishly. It was so humiliating. George looked up at the white ceiling. It was so good.

“You’re beautiful,” Dream said.

George bit his lip, “shut up.”

“I mean it,” he said. “George. Look at me.”

George shook his head slightly, not being able to muster words that wouldn’t just turn into whines. This made Dream grab the back of his head, pulling himself up, so that George had no choice but to look at him.

“You’re beautiful,” he pressed.

“Oh my God, just touch me alre—“

“Tell me you’re beautiful and I’ll touch you,” he said, tone firm.

George stared, mumbling, “I’m beautiful. I’m— Dream. Touch me? Please?”

Dream glared at him at the request, but obliged, fell to his elbows and pressed his head in between George’s thighs. It wasn’t until George felt the fabric of his clothing pressing against his skin that George noticed he was half dressed, and confident, and George was naked, and humiliated.. How did he get here. While that thought ran through George’s brain, Dream took it as his chance to lick a stripe up the shaft of his cock. This made George buckle his hips, whining high-pitched. Dream chuckled.

“You’re so needy,” he said, “I could just leave you here and you could hump the air and get yourself off. Right?”

“Don’t,” was all George could muster. “Please— Please just—“

George was cut off with Dream taking all of George in his mouth, bobbing his head and swirling his tongue along every vein. George immediately moaned embarrassingly pornographically, squirming around against the bed and feeling tears well up in his eyes. He wrapped his legs around Dreams head, squeezing it with his thighs as an attempt to stop squirming everywhere.

“Dream— it’s— it’s too much,” he let out, whining loudly. This made Dream pull off immediately with a small pop, staring at him. George buckled his hips at the sudden lack of stimulation.

“You want me to stop?” Dream asked mockingly, which made George shake his head no, grabbing at Dream’s hair in an attempt to pull him down again.

“No— please,” George whimpered. “Please suck my dick again, you’re so, so good, you’re so good at it, please.”

Dream stared at him expectedly, grinning at his pathetic blabbering, a small ‘is that all you can do?’ expression plastered to his face.

“You’re so much better than him,” George confessed. That must’ve been good enough, because with a groan, Dream swallowed George’s cock again.

“Fuck,” George whined, thrusting out into Dream’s mouth. He couldn’t think, the only thing going on was dark, dark red need. George let out small whimpers and moans, and Dream ran his tongue along his vain and it was so red. Beyond the canvas of a sky, beyond any barrier between colours, they lay, saturated and sensual.

“Fuck,” George whined, tapping Dreams shoulder as some form of a ‘time out’ and continuing to squirm, “Fuck, I’m gonna cum. Fuck, *fuck* .”

Dream looked up at him, grinning, and pulling off which made George groan in protest, curling his fists into tiny balls and punching weakly against his skin. Dream laughed.

“You know,” he said, finally, finally undoing his shirt, “I thought that you would be the one doing that. You’re great with your mouth, aren’t you George?”

“You’re a bastard,” he whispered. “You said you wanted to please me better than he could. Do it then.”

Dream smiled at him, pulling off his belt with his right hand easily, throwing it to the side, “Oh, I will.”

He leant back down, leaning to kiss George’s mouth, the irony taste of his cock on his tongue as he pressed it into George’s mouth. Dream wrapped his right hand around George’s length, running his finger over the slit, causing George to hiss into his mouth, and began pumping. George pulled back from the kiss, only to see the way Dream’s hand looked, big, tanned, the pale pink curve of George’s cock sliding in and out from it. George whined, fucking into Dream’s hand, eyes screwed tightly shut.

“I’m,” George panted, getting cut off with another kiss from Dream, against the side of his lips. “I’m, I might—”

“*Shh*,” Dream hushed, smile growing. “It’s okay. Hold on for a second, baby.” His pace quickened, and George swore he could see stars. “You’re so *gorgeous*. I don’t know how anybody could have you and not get you like this, all undone and perfect.”

“*Fuck*,” George whined, voice breaking slightly from pleasure. Tears formed in his eyes, chest tightened. “Please, *please* —”

“Of course you can cum, darling,” Dream said softly, George spilling over with a high-pitched whine, back arching off the sheets of the bed. Cum fell onto Dream’s hands, across the crevices of his fingers, the image alone arousal-inducing.

“Perfect,” Dream purred, slowly pumping him through the orgasm. He pressed his lips to the lower of George’s neck, sucking slightly, and murmuring, “So, so good for me.”

His hands slowed, sliding off. He stared at the semen in his hands, spreading out his fingers, and George reached up, sucking it off of his index and middle finger enthusiastically. It was sticky as he swallowed, the taste strange and unpleasant. But it was Dream’s hands, and he could taste the salty sweat, tongue running up and down the crack between his fingers.

Dream stared at him in awe. His voice was low, raspy. “*God, I want to fuck you so bad.*”

George pulled off of fingers, looking at him, eyes dark pools of want. He hooked his bare legs around Dream’s back, pulling the clothed bulge of Dream’s cock to rub against his hole. “Do it then.”

Dream’s voice was breathy, eyes blown. “*Fuck*, okay.”

He shakily pressed another kiss to George, this time to his nipple, a particularly sensitive part of George that caused him to whine bite back a whine, nearly loosing his dominant demeanour in a second. Dream pulled off, eyes blown.

“I’m going to finger you, now, as long as that’s okay.”

George stared up at him. He pressed his hand to the inner of Dream's chest, feeling his heartbeat boom against George's delicate fingers.

"Of course," George said. "Are *you* okay?"

Dream nodded quickly. "Yeah, don't worry. It's just... a lot."

"Yeah," George nodded softly, stroking across his peck. "We can always stop, if you want."

"No, no, god, no," Dream responded, laughter coming through. He shook his head lightly, "no, I want you more than I could put into words. That's why it's a lot."

"Ah," George grinned confidently, "I see."

"I have lube in my jacket," Dream whispered to George, looking over at the garment that he had thrown against the floor.

"Then you're a whore," George whispered back, smirking widely. Dream flushed, scoffing slightly at the boldness of his words.

"Fuck you," Dream laughed through his whispers, pulling away from George and getting off the bed to pull up his jacket, fumbling with the pockets. George stared up at the ceiling, reaching his hand down to stroke his cock lazily, feeling it twitch fully hard inside his palm.

Dream stood back up, undoing his fly and pulling his pants off, revealing the bulge in his boxers, and thick, muscular legs. He straddled George's lower legs as he got back onto the mattress. George pulled himself in between his thighs, some animalistic gaze urging him to *taste*. Through the fabric of his boxers, he kissed and sucked against where the print of his cock showed to be, Dream hissing unexpectedly.

"Hey, hey—" Dream pulled his hands over his head, bringing them down to exhale harshly into his hand. He pulled his right hand down to pull against the dark of George's hair, pulling him off reluctantly. "This, this is about you— another time."

Another time. The words hung in the air so a second, the unspoken question that George did not want to face then or ever, about what they are.

"Okay," George nodded.

"We still need to get to fingering you," Dream said, tone playful. He held the lubricant he had grabbed, pouring it onto his fingers generously, spreading it around in his hand.

"You don't need that much," George said.

"Okay," Dream placed the lube down and rolling the lid back on. "Why? Have you already prepped yourself while I wasn't looking for two seconds?"

George laughed, turning his head to the side. "No, I, uh.." his cheeks reddened with embarrassment. "I kind of... I like the pain?"

Dream stared at him, words clearly failing him. While George had expected some kinky taunt, a laugh of mocking, he was met with an awe-stricken breath of, "*Fuck, baby.*"

He grabbed George's thighs, pulling them towards him, George spreading them easily. Dream spread open his cheeks, thumb caressing his hole.

Dream finally pressed his finger in, George hissing at the stretch. The layer of lubricant across Dream's fingers was cold.

"Do you know how long I've waited to do this?" Dream whispered. "How many times you got me hard from acting like a fucking slut?"

George bit his lip, as Dream pressed another in and started to move his fingers in a scissor movement. His fingertip brushed across George's prostate, causing him to whine and whisper, "there, there, right there."

Dream twisted his fingers, against it, causing George to squirm, hands grabbing at Dream's back.

"The time you moaned at my house, in front of my band," Dream added a third, "The time that you were on your knees in front of me," his finger grazed over George's prostate, and George, for a second, swore that he could see every colour of the rainbow, bright, bright, bright and loud. Dream's voice moved to George's ears, voice husky and low, "Fuck, do you know how hard I was when you were *drunk* and *gorgeous* and saying all of those things... you knew what you were doing to me, didn't you?"

George bit his lip, words trying and failing to form. George's cock was upturned, hard, and pink against his stomach, and Dream was looking at it— at *him* in this way that screamed possession, and some sick part of George loved it. He hadn't even been fucked but he could already feel the taste of addiction it could stur, as Dream crooked his fingers and George squirmed, as sensitive as a virgin.

Nights and nights of staying up fantasising about exactly this flashed back to George, romanticising every calloused fingertip and flexed vein. He way he would stretch them out or press them together would be written down as what exactly to think about that night throughout adolescence.

"I—" George got out in between small gasps, "I, I used to think about this all the time. Y-your hands."

"My hands?" Dream purred, twisting his fingers once more, George frantically pressing the back of his right hand to his mouth and biting it, eyes squeezed shut. It was better than any fantasy.

"Y-yeah," George nodded, eyes to the ceiling. "Doing this."

"Doing what?" Dream asked. "What am I doing, princess?"

Princess. The nickname had been uttered lightheartedly through spite and mocking, leaving George uncomfortable and dismissive, but now, it made George whimper, keeping from stimulation.

"Fingering me," George's voice was weak. "I thought about your hands ruining me. I could— I could get off on this alone. It's better than I thought."

"What else is it better than, George?"

Dream's voice was harsh, implying someone that felt miles away. Because here, it was them, them and the bed and the colour of the sky. Here it was red, red, pungent and deep, the colour of lips, a rose, blood.

"Him," George breathed. "Fuck, it's better than him."

"Good," Dream said softly. He reached for the band of his boxers, pulling them off energetically. George watched his cock spring free, and holy fuck.

"Jesus christ," George laughed, Dream laughing with him. His cock was *big*, and *thick*. Wordshippable. It was torture that he wasn't aloud to suck on it. With his lube covered hand, he stroked it, covering it in the transparent liquid. It was pornographic, George wanted to video it so he could use it to get off later. Dream's eyes scrunched in pleasure. He must've known how good he looked.

"Don't use a condom, please," George requested weakly.

"Wasn't planning on it," Dream grinned. He leant down to George, leaning himself further down until he hovered overtop of George, body towering over him, big. His hand pressed across George's chest, spreading the length of his fingers across the entirety of George's chest, the other hand holding him up. He lined his cock with George's hole, and, fuck, this was really happening. George nodded a silent consent for him to go in.

He pushed in slowly, letting out a trail of, "Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck," until he bottomed out. George whined, them both realising that he probably should've been stretched a bit more. It *hurt*, it stung, but in such a good way. George felt so full.

"Oh my god," Dream said, voice deep into George's ear. His next words were low whispers, "Oh my *god*, you're so fucking tight."

George was obsessed with his voice. There was something about how it could transfer from something pretty and cheerful, to deep and dirty, like it was then.

"Move," George intended it to be an order, but it came out a beg, needy and wanting. Dream nodded, snapping his hips back, and in, back, and in, slowly, angling his hips in order to find George's prostate. He found it on the fourth thrust, George whining loudly, grabbing at his back. And then Dream was hitting it over, and over, and over, swift thrusts leaving George practically bouncing against his hips, whining loudly.

No pinch could convince him that it was real, because nothing real could feel that good.

The room was full of the slapping of skin, and their out of breath moans, full of overwhelming pleasure. George didn't know when he had started, but through whines and whimpers tears had spilled over his eyes, down his cheeks, whines breaking off into sobs. He hadn't felt like this in years. He tried to grab his cock, but his hand was too weak, falling off of his chest. Dream had conducted every move of his life to this moment, from a heart-stopped, flustered teenager to an obsessed stubborn 24 year old.

"Fuck, Dream," George sobbed.

"Call me Clay," Dream said breathlessly, before leaning down to kiss him through grunts and pants, grabbing onto George's cock to jerk him off. The overstimulation from both his ass and his cock was overwhelming, George wanting to say *anything* but only being able to whine with pleasure.

He came long and hard the second time that night, white streaks shooting onto Dream's muscular stomach, and for a second, everything flashed bright, vibrant, every colour of the rainbow. Dream's tried to jerk and fuck him through it, but hand having to steady himself against George's chest. He thrust into George energetically, cumming only seconds after, voice breaking on a curse.

Dream finally stopped, relaxing by lying onto George. George's delicate fingers reached up to stroke the curve of his back, whispering praises of, "you're so good. Perfect. That was incredible."

They laid there for awhile, the orchestra calming down to a Cadenza, bodies intertwined, panting. It was unreal, it was a dream. The man that George had hated, sworn to be the person he liked the least in the world only months ago, lay in his arms. Together, they were a mix of *Lizst* and bass guitar. They were quiet yet laughter-filled, and ready to consume each other's lives. Two musicians, unlikely yet perfect for each other. Maybe, up in the sky, if the universe were to have a conscience, it had brought them together once more, so that they could lay, like they did, in each other's arms.

That night, George spoke to his adolescent self. Some sorrowful version of himself, confused and degraded. And he told him that there would be a time when it all pays off. You'll get him. Just you wait. And you'll see red, red, red.

Chapter End Notes

hi! as i said in the first note, im not going to discontinue this dont worry! i have WAYY too many prewritten scenes lmao. i just think that so far, the main plot of this, now that they've slept together, has been resolved, and i don't want this fic to be too long. so, (while in the bath lol, me and dream making big decisions in the bath wow) i came to the conclusion that this would be the end and work as a first book. that being said, i will be taking a break from writing, and i cant promise that the second book will be updated as regularly as some chapters in this fic have been.

one of the predicaments i've found while making this decision has been that "obsessed and stubborn" works only really for this fic, and "lungs full of smoke" relates more to the second part, where they are ACTUALLY lovers. so ill basically be splitting the title in half + it sounds cheesy af together, ive never really liked the title.

this topic of this kind of toxic relationship is something that i've experienced, and i'm glad my portrayal of it could be touching.

another thing i wont be able to promise for the second volume (? sounds so formal) is that it'll be 17 chapters long. my estimate from here is that it'll be more around 9, but honestly who knows.

thank you all for all of the support, i appreciate every kudos, every comment, every BOOKMARK (i look through those whenever im feeling down) and this is not the end! as for how long this break could last— it honestly really depends, it could be two weeks or a month. i just should probably be focusing more on school than a minecraft fanfiction ahahah. i'm sure there are things i have quite obviously half-assed, and i hope with "lungs full of smoke" i can give my best, always. i'll see you after the break, and no doubt, miss this!! i hope that i can come back better than ever :) xx — ao3 writer hehepoopoo

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